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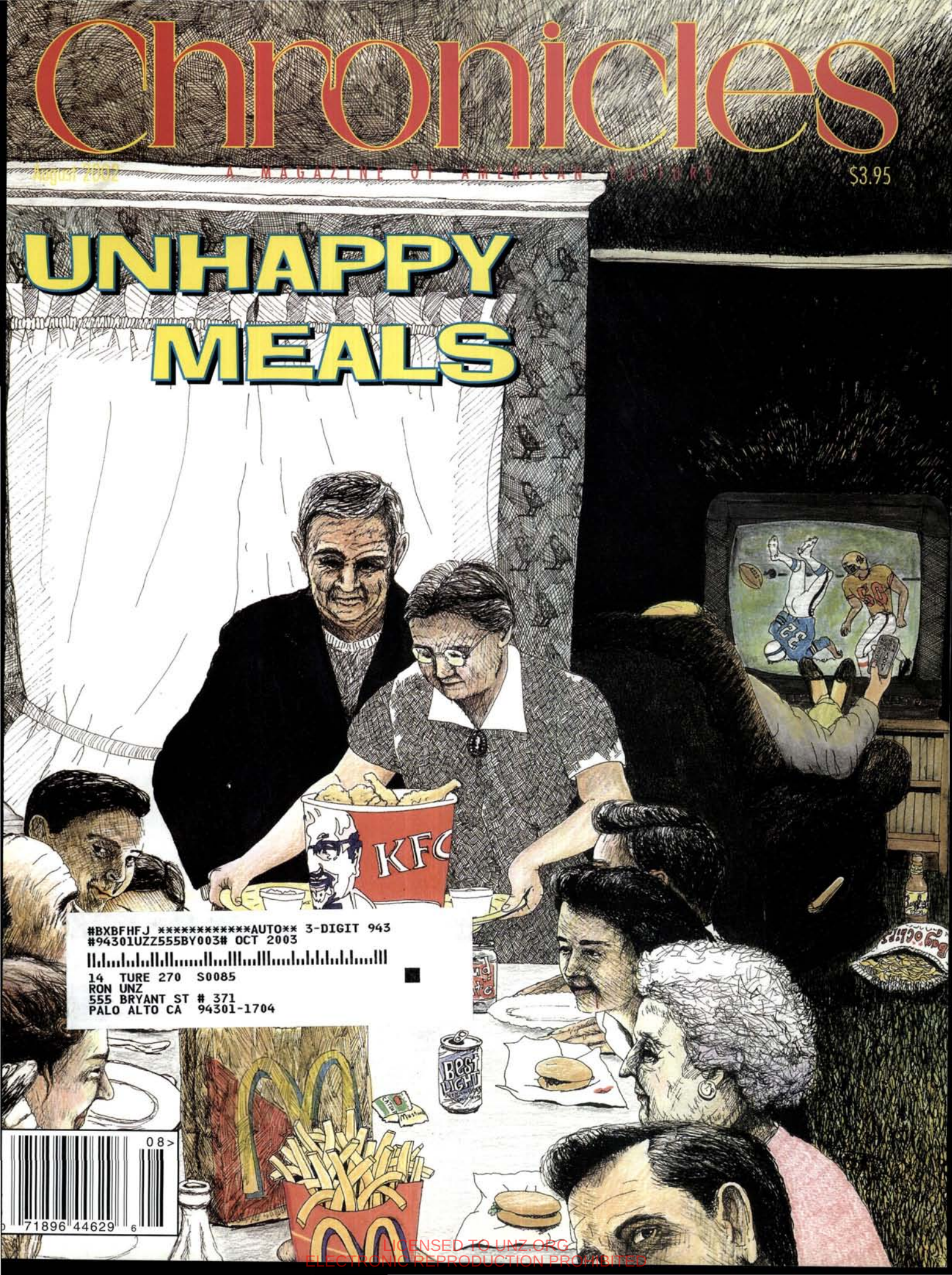

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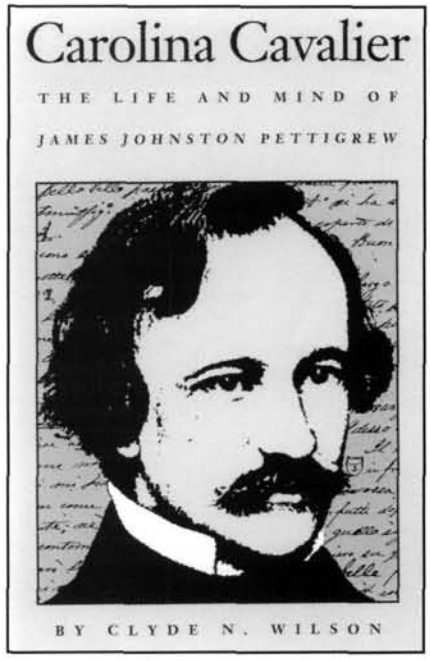

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A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Website: www.chroniclesmagazine.org
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5813.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

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Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture
(ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $39.00 (foreign subscriptions add $12 for surface delivery, $48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 26, No. 8 August 2002
Printed in the United States of America

On Monopolies

I found myself in complete agreement with Donald W. Livingston's (and thus Thomas Naylor's) arguments for downsizing the U.S.A. ("A 'Containment Policy' for the New Cold War," Vital Signs, May). The very next article, however, left me bewildered ("What's Good for General Motors . . . ," Vital Signs). It was hard to believe that it appeared in the same publication. David Hartman, outraged at the monopolists in our midst, has a solution: Let the government's crusading antitrust boys take care of those greedy capitalists! Yes, the very same government that, for over 200 years, has enforced that bureaucratic, bloated, inefficient, and corrupt supermonopoly, the Post Office. I invite Mr. Hartman to conduct an experiment by setting up two businesses: a software company to produce a computer operating system and a mail company to distribute first-class letters.

If he succeeds in the former, he will be rewarded by the public with nice profits. True, he will have to compete against Microsoft, but it's not an impossible mission, as a few other operating systems have demonstrated. They don't have the enormous sales that Microsoft has, but they are there and available for anyone who wants them. For all of his power, Bill Gates can't get them off the market. But if Mr. Hartman succeeds in the latter, by establishing an efficient alternative to the Post Office, he will be rewarded by a few years in prison. Unlike Bill Gates, the U.S. government will send its thugs after Mr. Hartman for having the temerity to compete with their official monopolist. That, Mr. Hartman, is the difference between government and the private sector. There can be no permanent monopoly without government enforcement.

—Lambert Sideris
Phoenix, Arizona

Mr. Hartman Replies:

Mr. Sideris raises one valid question (Should the U.S. government monopolize the U.S. mails?) and begs another (Can a monopoly exist without government enforcement?).

The first question is a diversion from the central question of my article: Does bigger mean better when it comes to economic organization? As such, I shall only note that the organization of the delivery of the U.S. mail is not simply a question of privatization versus socialism.

The legal and policing powers that secure the safe circulation of monetary and legal instruments are plausible justifications for control of the mail service by the U.S. government. The real issue is not cost efficiency (as demonstrated by UPS). Ideally, the federal government would continue operating its current postal service for those who prefer to use it, while allowing for private competition.

Mr. Sideris's assertion that monopoly cannot exist without government enforcement is not self-evident and, even if proved true, would not be a sufficient basis for discrediting legal restriction of anticompetitive practices.

Our principal antitrust laws—the Sherman Antitrust Act and the Robinson-Patman Act—delineate anticompetitive practices in general and predatory pricing practices in particular. Whether or not you agree with them, these acts are part of U.S. commercial law. To propose that Microsoft be exempted from these laws is to propose that we enforce the law selectively. Microsoft used connectivity as a barrier to competitive software and, in so doing (much as IBM had done in past), effectively and illegally restrained competitive trade.

Do the Sherman Antitrust Act and the Robinson-Patman Act unnecessarily interfere with the privileges of successful entrepreneurs, since, many claim, no monopoly will last forever and, thus, they are entitled to whatever profits the market may allow in the interim? As the advance of socialism throughout the 20th century has shown, if successful entrepreneurs are allowed to collude or connive to prevent the emergence of legitimate competition in order to enlarge or prolong their profits, citizens will look for alternative economic organization, efficient or not, in protest of what amounts to monopoly taxation added to the prices of their goods and services.

To allow Microsoft or any other dominant competitor to restrain trade lowers

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technological progress, consumer choice, optimal price, and overall economic efficiency. Most importantly, it diminishes the public's faith in the efficacy of free markets.

On Meds and Mental Illness

As a practicing child psychiatrist, I agree with some of B.K. Eakman's points regarding psychotropic medications (*Cultural Revolutions*, May) but not with the main thrust of her argument.

Before the mid-1950's, there were no effective treatments for mental illness. None. Psychotherapy was, of course, in full flower, and psychoanalytical theorists (Freud and his followers) ruled the field. Unfortunately, their practices were largely oriented to the "worried well." The state hospitals were crammed full of the severely psychotically ill who suffered terribly. When the first antipsychotic drug, chlorpromazine, and first antidepressant, imipramine, appeared, the results were so startling that thousands of patients were able to be discharged from mental hospitals.

These early drugs work well to this day, but they (like all drugs) have side effects. Thus science (and, yes, that includes pharmaceutical corporations) has strived to find drugs that might work better with fewer, or less bothersome, side effects. The Prozac generation of antidepressants came along in the late 80's. The big improvement over the older drugs is the relative lack of danger in case of overdose. They also cause fewer "nuisance" side effects, such as weight gain. Whether they can cause what we shrinks call "behavioral disinhibition" is a matter of debate. I've never had a patient who was taking these drugs kill someone, but I have, occasionally, seen an increase of temper or aggressive behavior. Generally, you can spot this, change the dosage or the drug, and all is well.

The argument that, because the Harrises and Klebolds of the world all seem to be on meds, meds must be bad holds no logic. I use and will continue to use psychotropic drugs in my practice so long as I believe that they help people and that the risk of harm is low. That ratio of good *versus* bad has to be strongly weighted in favor of the positive.

I read a lot of conservative publications and, in general, detect an undertone of hostility toward psychiatry. This may reflect more on the type of people in the specialty than what we psychiatrists actually do. I would estimate that 25 percent of my colleagues are homosexual; only five percent, Christian; and the vast majority, left-liberal in political view. This undoubtedly has some impact on the way in which they practice psychiatry.

Unfortunately, mental illness is very real and needs treatment. Within the realm of medicine, psychiatry is a low-prestige, relatively low-income specialty, and, politics aside, there are a lot of honest, hard-working physicians trying to help their patients with whatever will work best.

—*Mitch Parsons, M.D.*
Edmonton, Alberta

Mrs. Eakman Replies:

If Dr. Parsons finds "an undertone of hostility" towards psychology and psychiatry among conservatives, and if he notes that many of his colleagues tend to be politically liberal and sexually confused, this is not surprising. The politically left-leaning, in my experience, tend to prefer a quick fix to the arduous, long-term challenge of dealing with life experiences, which requires a certain strength of character.

Where psychology and psychiatry—and, indeed, all of the behavioral sciences—began to go wrong was when guilt and conscience began to be condemned. In the 1940's, the argument was that guilt and conscience forced people to take responsibility for feelings and events beyond their control. This view was promoted heavily after World War II by Drs. Broch Chisholm, Ewen Cameron, and John Rawlings Reese, among others. Then these ideas made their way into women's magazines. Women of the immediate postwar era were vulnerable to this logic and ready to accept it. "Do you want to be a Hitler, a Mussolini?" psychologists challenged. Nobody did. So this effort to eradicate or at least soften guilt, sin, shame, and conscience during the 50's and 60's started to overturn 2,000 years of Judeo-Christian thought.

Suddenly, we were looking at guilt and conscience not as civilizing influences that reign in the baser instincts but as neuroses and psychosis. Of course, troubled people would prefer to let a pill cure their troubles or at least help them to deal with their problems rather than take on the incredibly difficult task of applying religious principles.

To save his own life, a person with homosexual tendencies should learn not to practice his behaviors at all. Ever. That is easy to say, of course, but not easy to do. The person who is hypercritical and without patience, whose gut reaction is to cut down anyone who gets in his way or annoys him, should learn to stop his tongue, to say nothing, to think something else every time, period. Again, easy to say, not easy to do. But that is what Christianity demands. The Sermon on the Mount sets out this principle repeatedly. Better to lose one of your limbs, Jesus said, than to cast your soul into hell.

Any psychologist will admit that, once the behaviors mentioned above become habits, they will quickly become ritual obsessions, wreck your life, destroy any enjoyment that you may otherwise have—and you cannot fix that with a pill, with electroshock, or with psychotherapy.

I never claimed that all people who take psychiatric drugs go berserk. I wrote that angry persons who take antidepressants often lose impulse control. Does that mean murder? No. But it may mean throwing the pan of oatmeal boiling over on the stove right through the window, or smashing the computer keyboard because you hit a wrong key. Many adults who are prescribed antidepressants for migraine headaches and other problems have had such reactions and are too embarrassed by these behaviors to tell their doctors. Some simply stop taking the pills, citing the excuse that "I just didn't feel good." But what about kids, who lack impulse control anyway? They aren't going to make the connection between out-of-character behavior and normal teenage impulses.

I find it troubling that Dr. Parsons should applaud the fact that so many mentally ill people have been discharged from hospitals now that psychiatric medications have allowed them to "function" in society. Is that why we have thousands of rapists, murderers, pedophiles, and folks with criminal records as long as your arm running amok?

We are dealing with a problem of perspective. Side effects such as weight gain do not compare, in any way, with such side effects as loss of impulse control, and pills and psychotherapy cannot take the place of character, integrity, and conscience.

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THE SUPREME COURT, in its landmark 6-3 decision in *Atkins* v. *Virginia*, has taken the penultimate step toward total elimination of the death penalty in the United States. The facts of the case are clear: Daryl Atkins and an accomplice plotted to rob a customer in a convenience store; abducting their victim, they took him to an ATM and forced him to withdraw $200; they then drove to a remote area and released their victim, whom Atkins shot eight times for no apparent reason except to eliminate the witness. The defense put forward by Atkins' lawyers, that he scored 59 on an IQ test, was rejected by a jury, which may have put more stock in testimony that the murderer, though far from being a scholastic philosopher—or even rocket-scientist material—appeared to have normal intelligence.

Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the majority, could not even pretend to find evidence that the execution of the dull and stupid had ever constituted "cruel and unusual punishment." Like all leftist lawyers, he had to fall back on the theory of progress as spelled out in a 1958 Supreme Court decision based on "evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society." That decision was not given in 1758, when a plausible case might have been made that standards of decency were improving, but in 1958, after the two most destructive wars in human history, the Nazi death camps, the firebombings of German civilian centers, the detonation of two atomic bombs on Japanese civilians, the mass murders of Lenin, Stalin, and Mao. Only a moral idiot, like Stevens and Sandra Day O'Connor, could possibly regard the world of 2002 as morally superior to the world of 1902. The majority also held that the death penalty could not act as a deterrent for retarded people who are, presumably, incapable of seeing the future consequences of their actions.

The "usual suspects," as Justices Antonin Scalia, William Rehnquist, and Clarence Thomas are known in the leftist press, voted to uphold the death penalty, and in his passionate and learned dissent, Justice Scalia placed much weight on Justice Stevens' misinterpretation of the Eighth Amendment and on the obvious fact that there is no consensus against executing the mentally "retarded."

There is another, more fundamental aspect to the decision, however, that Justice Scalia chose (perhaps correctly) not to address, and that is the connection between intelligence and moral responsibility (and even human personhood) that is often assumed in discussions of the other end of the life issue, the question of abortion. Many conscientious people say they oppose abortion except in cases of rape, incest, and unborn children incapable of leading a normal life, either because of severe physical defects or because of mental retardation. When students used to make this case in one of my college classes, I could usually persuade them to put the IQ cutoff line around 60 or 55. I would then point out to them that at least a few of the students had IQ's in the 100-115 range, and that I knew plenty of people with IQ's over 145 who might be tempted to look at people with a 100 IQ as not really human. As a high-school principal, however, I dealt with students with IQ's in the 50's and 60's, and although they could not pass algebra, they could get through first-year Latin, and they knew the difference between truth and lies, right and wrong. They were human beings, capable of leading lives that are morally responsible and fulfilling.

Intelligence and moral responsibility do not go hand in hand. The Nazi leaders were, for the most part, quite bright, even brilliant men. Their intelligence, however, did them no good. If a man with a 59 IQ cannot rationally understand that a murder today may result in an execution a few years down the road, what shall we say of a fictional Hannibal Lecter or a real Heinrich Himmler? That they were morally incapable of regarding murder as a crime? I am sure John Paul Stevens, Sandy O'Connor, Ruth Ginsburg, and the others are all smart as whips—and look where it got them. On the evidence of this and other decisions, a liberal jurist would have to conclude that the justices cannot be held morally responsible for their actions.

The justices' decision to define human responsibility in terms of IQ has grim consequences that a prudent man should be able to foresee. If people of low intelligence are not responsible for their actions, they obviously cannot be trusted to live among us. The only rational conclusion is that the federal government should establish a new legal category for those who do not make the cutoff (now defined as an IQ of 60, though I suspect it will turn out to be something like 85). Such people obviously cannot be allowed to vote, sit on juries, or hold public office. They cannot, in other words, be citizens. More fundamentally, they cannot be allowed to roam free, committing murders for which we cannot hold them responsible.

Progressive jurists such as Oliver Wendell Holmes and Nazi judges consistently held that stupid people should be sterilized. The progressive majority on the U.S. Supreme Court has now discovered a very good reason why stupid people should be incarcerated in concentration camps. Someday, when the progressives return to their roots, they will probably declare—on the basis of *Atkins* v. *Virginia*—that stupid people do not have the right to live, just as they currently do not have the right to be born.

—*Thomas Fleming*

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, as this issue goes to press, is illegal for children in the public schools of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington state to recite, because it contains the words "under God." Two out of three judges on a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit believe that the federal statute adding those two words to the pledge in 1954 was in violation of the First Amendment's mandate: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion."

No ruling by any court in recent memory has been denounced as vehemently by politicians—both houses of Congress proceeded the next day to recite the pledge noisily, emphasizing the words "under God." The federal solons even sang "God Bless America" for good measure (indicating that the logic of the Ninth Circuit would also prohibit public-school children from singing that ditty or from carrying in their pockets coins with "In God We Trust" stamped on them). The President quickly denounced the decision, as did prominent leaders in both political parties. A few

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ACLU and rigid separation-of-Church-and-state types, who seemed incapable of understanding the general feeling that the pledge is more about simple patriotism than religion, praised the ruling and remarked, quite correctly, that it was in keeping with Supreme Court decisions barring public-school prayer, graduation invocations by local clergymen, and even student-led prayer at football games, as well as a plethora of other court decisions barring the display of the Ten Commandments or crèches on public property.

These anti-religion decisions, from the point of view of someone who believes that the Constitution ought to be interpreted according to the understanding of the First Amendment when it was framed, are all clearly wrong. The First Amendment (which, by the way, was aimed only at preventing action by the federal government, not by the states, as it has been interpreted for the last couple of generations) was intended to prevent Congress from *establishing* a particular national religion, not to prevent Congress from expressing a preference for some religion over none. As late as the middle of this century, it was commonly held (even by Supreme Court justices) that the United States was a "Christian nation," and almost all of the writings of the Framers indicate that they believed a strong religious faith was necessary for good citizenship, for virtue, and for republican government itself. *Chronicles* readers know well the Framers' mantra that there could be no order without law, no law without morality, and no morality without religion. There were, perhaps, some dissenters (Thomas Jefferson famously tried to prove that Christianity was not a part of the common law, for example, and James Madison believed that it was wrong for states to establish churches), but it is doubtful that even the two of them would have opposed the simple indication of classic piety in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Most believe that the panel's majority will be overruled, either by the majority of the entire Ninth Circuit (hearing the case together, as they occasionally choose to do), or by the U.S. Supreme Court. Indeed, since other federal courts, most notably the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals (which covers Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin) had previously ruled that there was no First Amendment problem with the text of the pledge, the Supreme Court needs to decide which circuit got it right. The consensus of constitutional scholars, up to and including liberal Harvard professor Laurence H. Tribe, is that a reversal is a sure thing, though nothing about First Amendment law these days is ever really certain.

The glee of those who would banish religion from the public square was short-lived, however, because the day after the Ninth Circuit's pledge decision came down, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its long-awaited ruling in the Cleveland school-voucher case. The Sixth Circuit had ruled Cleveland's voucher plan unconstitutional because most of the publicly funded vouchers had been spent on religious schools (thus, according to the Sixth Circuit, entangling the state with the Church, in violation of the Establishment Clause). But a five-person majority of the Supreme Court, consistent with their policy of giving the states and local governments discretion in matters of education, ruled that the program presented no Establishment Clause problems as long as the Cleveland parents who used vouchers had a choice of sending their children to nonreligious schools. "Common sense," Lincoln is said to have remarked, "is not particularly common," but if it was missing from two of the three Ninth Circuit judges, it could at least still be found in five of the Supreme Court justices.

—*Stephen B. Presser*

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE's ban by a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit will probably have been reversed and the public furor will have faded away by the time this issue of your favorite journal reaches you. In the end, all that will have happened is that the politicians will have enjoyed an opportunity to exhibit their courageous support for God and the flag.

In the last half-century, federal courts have rearranged race relations in America in a way that has affected private as well as public life; they have overturned most state constitutions, adopted *by the people*, in the interest of "one man, one vote"; they have overturned laws of most of the states in order to make possible baby-killing on a massive scale; they have taken over numerous local governments and school districts and levied taxes on citizens, though the right of the people not to be taxed without their consent has been the core principle of freedom since the Founding; they have made criminal law into a contest of technicalities rather than of proof and justice.

In short, a judicial oligarchy has seized massive amounts of power from the people and their elected representatives and has subverted the Constitution and government by the consent of the governed. In response, there have been little more than scattered murmurs from the victims.

But let the courts meddle with something really important, like the Pledge of Allegiance, and outrage knows no bounds. Of course, the pledge is not a right or a privilege or a duty; it is just a custom, and a rather pointless and intrusive one at that. As my friend the Rev. Tim Manning points out, the virtuous do not need a pledge, and the rest will not honor it anyway.

A look at the history of the pledge to the national flag, which is actually a pledge of allegiance not to the country or the people but to the federal government, reveals the great irony of the recent controversy.

Such pledges did not mark the early years of the United States. They were unknown until they were employed as coercive devices in the South during the War Between the States and Reconstruction. The Constitution of the United States does not require pledges to the flag or to the government. What the Founding Fathers called for is an oath to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy, a defrocked Boston minister and Marxist, for a celebration of the 400th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage to the New World. It was promoted by the National Education Association as a way to enforce conformity to "Americanism" among its captive students, especially first- and second-generation immigrants.

The pledge became pervasive during the public frenzy of World War I, when dissenters or suspected dissenters from "100-percent Americanism" were subject to harassment—and worse—from petty officialdom nearly everywhere. Meanwhile, the pledge was recited with great verve at Ku Klux Klan rallies during the 1920's, under batteries of United States (not Confederate) flags.

It was not until 1954 that the "offensive" phrase "under God" was inserted into the pledge, largely the result of a lobbying campaign by the Knights of Columbus. It was a well-meaning but

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useless effort. It is not possible to transform what was clearly meant as a technique of mass-government-worship into something pious. Of course, I will gladly take an oath to uphold the Constitution; free people, however, should not be asked to pledge allegiance to a government's flag.

—*Clyde Wilson*

U.S. INTELLIGENCE claims to have foiled an Al Qaeda plot to explode a radioactive "dirty bomb" in an American city. Abdullah al-Muhajir, a 31-year-old American-born U.S. citizen of Latin American origin, made the mistake of traveling to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport from Pakistan after concluding his terrorist training. Had he taken the trouble to travel through Canada instead, he would likely be at large, unknown and undetected, rather than in military custody aboard a Navy vessel in Charleston, South Carolina.

The longest demilitarized international border in the world, that between the United States and Canada, is also the most porous. There are only 1,773 Customs agents and 300 Border Patrol officers for 4,000 miles. Even assuming that one third of the latter are on duty at all times, each agent would have to "protect" 40 miles of the border. In practice, that means America's huge northern frontier is wide open, undefended, and unsupervised. Over one half of the official border crossings—62 of the 113 points of entry—are not operated around the clock; during the summer months, thousands of campers and boatmen cross without any control whatsoever.

That would be just fine if Canada could be trusted to subject her visitors to a level of scrutiny similar to that finally being introduced in the United States following last year's terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, this is not the case, and Canada's total and incomprehensible failure to protect herself from the emergence of an Islamic terrorist network has serious implications for America's security.

Retired Canadian diplomat James Bissett, the executive director of Canada's Immigration Service from 1985 to 1990, argues that Canadian refugee legislation and practice is a threat to the security of his country as well as that of the United States. Canada has accepted 15,000 "refugees" since September 11, most of them bogus asylum-seekers who want to bypass regular immigration procedures. Twenty-five hundred of them came from countries that are breeding-grounds for Islamic terrorists, including Algeria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Many arrive without any documents at all, and "for most of them, we don't know who the hell they are," Bissett says.

In 2000, Canada accepted 38,000 "asylum-seekers"; last year, their number jumped to 44,000. Once they arrive in Canada, they are granted housing, welfare, and health benefits—and turned loose. They know that it will be up to two years before their immigration hearings are held, and one-fifth never bother to turn up anyway: They just disappear. Those whose requests are turned down often stay illegally, and Canada does not have the resources or the will to track them down and deport them to their country of origin.

"Canada has the most generous refugee laws in the world that offers everything for the discriminating terrorist," says Bissett. "You get taken care of, and you can blend into a vast immigrant population." Two thirds of these asylum-seekers don't have proper documents when they arrive. Absurdly, new legislation that just took effect in July will, by adding more levels of review, actually "make it easier for asylum seekers to come into the country."

Bissett points out that a number of terrorists have taken advantage of the system, including Ahmed Ressam, an "asylum-seeker" and Al Qaeda operative who planned to bomb the Los Angeles International Airport before U.S. authorities arrested him.

Canada's visitor-visa regime is also in need of urgent overhaul. Unfazed by the fact that 15 of the 19 September 11 hijackers were from Saudi Arabia, Canada still allows Saudi citizens to come as visitors without a visa, providing an excellent route for Islamic operatives deterred by more stringent U.S. security measures: It is a short drive from the Lester Pearson International Airport in Toronto to a pleasure boat on one of the Great Lakes, with the American Midwest wide open on the other shore.

Bissett's warnings are echoed by David Harris, the former chief of strategic planning for the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service: "Given the fact that the U.S. is the main enemy of a considerable number of the most vicious groups on our territory, I don't know that Americans should sleep terribly well," he said in an interview last April. "And it certainly means that the Canadian frontier assumes a complexion altogether different from that which is traditionally recognized." Canadian analysts insist that security can only be achieved when their country recognizes these problems and revamps its immigration and asylum regulations.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

ARKANSAS' Teachers Retirement System was the only government retirement system in the United States to lose money by investing in the offshore limited partnerships at the center of the Enron bankruptcy. The Cayman Islands-based partnerships "engaged in derivative transactions with Enron," according to a November 2001 SEC filing, allegedly "to permit Enron to hedge market risks." ATRS might never have invested funds if a state audit of the system in 1998-99 had been taken seriously. The audit reported that "Investment department management's failure to establish effective controls over investments resulted in inadequate supporting documentation for market values on alternative, real estate and Arkansas related investments totaling $581,245,825." "Alternative investments" is a broad term that includes derivatives and the Enron offshore limited partnerships. The audit also stated that "the accounting department did not maintain adequate accounting records and documentation to support differences between the general ledger and their published financial statements. Due to the lack of administrative review, inadequate staff training and absence of written policies and procedures, the general ledger was understated $1,107,931,345." That is revealing, given that ATRS, Arkansas' largest government retirement system, controls more than seven billion dollars in assets.

The issue is not whether government should ban or restrict the prudent use of derivatives to hedge risk. Rather, the issue is one of transparency—how best to provide increased disclosure. After Enron, government officials have been quick to legislate and enact regulations compelling *private businesses* to provide transparency to markets. They have, however, dragged their feet and resisted requiring *government systems* such as ATRS to provide transparency to members and taxpayers.

The largest government systems have derivative policies that are published on-

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line (unlike ATRS), including the California Public Employees' Retirement System (*www.calpers.ca.gov*), which updated its policy in December 2000. CALPERS' policy prohibits the writing of uncovered (nonhedged) calls, leveraging (borrowing to increase rate of return), and the use of nonexchange-traded derivatives. It permits CALPERS traders to use futures contracts, a type of derivative, but specifies that "Authorizing trade of S&P 500 stock index futures to 1000 long contracts and 1000 short contracts, without prior written authorization from management, is limited." The Arkansas statute on derivatives, on the other hand, is vague and does not address the issues raised by Enron.

ATRS's lack of transparency carries over to such important areas as asset allocation, largest equity holdings, and investment returns. This data is disclosed online in neighboring Mississippi by the state's Public Employees Retirement System, which provides even greater detail in its annual reports. The Mississippi system, for example, discloses online its equity position in Microsoft. To obtain the same information in Arkansas, you must file a formal request under the state's Freedom of Information Act. ATRS's Microsoft holding, as of December 31, 2000, had lost more than one third of its value, according to records obtained under FOIA.

—*Greg Kaza*

JESSE VENTURA's election to the governorship of Minnesota marked the apex of the full-fledged merger of politics and entertainment. When it came to celebrity, "Jesse Ventura" (his stage name, which, tellingly he used at his inauguration) was a jack-of-all trades: actor, professional wrestler, announcer, talk-radio host, football broadcaster. All of these professions, held in some combination or another for nearly three decades, allowed him to have more name recognition than, say, someone who had served in the state legislature for ten years would have had. It may have been a wave of disgust at the establishment suits running the state that vaulted Ventura into the governor's chair four years ago, but it was his celebrity that Minnesota voters craved, wishing that some might rub off on them. Our governor's famous; he's fun; he's exciting. We're not just a bunch of boring, morose Scandinavians up here: We're hip; we're happening. We actually elected a *professional wrestler* to our state's highest office. And he can beat up your governor, too.

Yet the same celebrity status that propelled Ventura to the governor's office helped to undo him. He recently announced that he will not run for reelection, perhaps signaling an end to the idea that entertainment and politics can be more than just fundraisers, endorsements, and political propaganda.

Ventura did not become the stereotypical jock-turned-student-body-president just because of his athletic prowess. When engaged, he could be as thoughtful and knowledgeable about public policy as any wonk. His administration did make significant strides in property-tax reduction and reform and in building a light-rail transit system in the Twin Cities. He surrounded himself with competent administrators. He asked tough questions of public-employee unions, educators, university officials, and others looking for handouts. And he didn't back down when they were offended.

Ventura, however, could not let go of his other personality, "The Body." Simply being governor either was not enough to satisfy his ego or was just too boring. He had to be "The Body" in his books, in his countless interviews on talk shows and in magazines all across the country, in his participation as a guest referee in a WWF match in Minneapolis, in guest roles on soap operas, and in serving as an announcer in the very short-lived Xtreme Football League (XFL). The idea that he damaged the dignity of his office by entertaining the masses was simply lost on him. All that mattered was collecting another handsome paycheck. He was another Bill Clinton: No sense of duty to the offices that they held was enough to keep them away from what they desired—for Clinton, women; for Ventura, money.

Despite all of that, despite all of the gaffes and the verbal battles with the media and the legislature, despite all of the nasty off-the-cuff comments and the excessive travel, Ventura was still in a position to win reelection. His two major-party opponents were legislative veterans, the kind of people he had successfully campaigned against in 1998, and he had their deficit-ridden budget—which he had vetoed and the legislature had overridden—to use against them.

But the lure of celebrity struck again. Like many celebrities, Ventura wants to have it both ways—to be famous and to avoid scrutiny. Thus, when disgruntled workers at the governor's mansion (which Ventura closed as a cost-cutting measure to thumb his nose at the legislature) began talking to the press about Ventura's son throwing wild parties there and con men becoming houseguests, Ventura threw a fit, whined about his family's privacy being violated, and pulled the plug on his reelection campaign.

Ventura's departure raises doubts about whether he was even serious about being governor or just viewed the campaign as an ego trip, another show to perform. In any case, his Independence Party will likely die a slow, quiet death robbed of its celebrity candidate. It has no identifiable cultural or economic base, and its grassroots are shallow because Ventura never bothered to cultivate them. Like its predecessor, the Reform Party, it floundered on the rocks of celebrity politics and candidates: Celebrities view parties as vehicles to make them bigger stars, not the other way around.

The American people may be souring on the idea that celebrities have anything to contribute to politics or policy debates other than money, p.r., and shopworn slogans. After September 11, would you want Warren Beatty, Cybill Shepherd, Hulk Hogan, Ric Flair, Donald Trump, Alec Baldwin, or any other celebrity running the country?

—*Sean Scallon*

OBITER DICTA: **Richard Moore**, a poet from Belmont, Massachusetts, has contributed three new poems to this issue. Mr. Moore is the author of nine books of poetry, as well as translations of Plautus and Euripides, a book of literary essays, and a novel, *The Investigator*. His most recent book of verse, *Pygmies and Pyramids*, was published by Orchises Press. Mr. Moore teaches at Clark University and gives frequent readings in the Boston area.

This month's art is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and he attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

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by Thomas Fleming

Eating With Sinners

And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying,
This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.
Likewise also the cup after supper, saying,
This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

—Luke 22:19-20

These familiar sentences from Luke's description of the Last Supper (which occur in parallel passages of Matthew and Mark) are quoted within the central act of Christian worship, when the mystery of He who was both God and Man is revealed in the bread and wine that is also the Body and Blood of our Lord. The Incarnation of God experienced by the faithful in the Sacrament is, at least from our human standpoint, the greatest of mysteries.

There is also, however, a more everyday dimension to the sacred scene. Jesus is dining with His friends, and it is a very special meal: the Passover. Like other observant Jews, they eat the paschal lamb and the unleavened bread; they drink the wine, and, although it is not mentioned, they doubtless consumed the bitter herbs to remind them of their anguish as slaves in Egypt.

Pagan cults also included sacred meals that united the worshipers and brought them closer to the divine beings. Walter Burkert describes "the sacred act" of the Grecks as

> the slaughter and consumption of a domestic animal for a god. The sacrifice is a festive occasion for the community. The contrast with everyday life is marked with washing, dressing in clean garments, and adornment, in particular, wearing a garland woven from twigs on the head . . .

After a procession and the slaughter, the animal is butchered, and the entrails are roasted for the god and a select group of participants, while the inedible parts are put upon the fire. Libations are poured (and later drunk), and the meat is distributed to the crowd. Barbecues and feasting of every kind were a prominent feature of the festivals that determined the calendars of a Greek city, and, "the order of life, a social order, is constituted in the sacrifice."

To Americans, who treat eating as either a shameful necessity—the worse food tastes, presumably, the more moral the consumer—or as an opportunity for displaying a lifestyle choice, the sacred meal is a notion even more alien than the good meal. Americans eat worse than any other wealthy nation in the history of the world. By "worse," I do not mean simply the synthetic starch-and-tallow meals warmed up in chain restaurants.

American restaurants are only a symbol of what is wrong with American eating habits. People who ate well at home simply would not put up with the poor service, worse food, and false pretensions of the average "fine" restaurant. American women do not, by and large, know how to cook—they have more important things to do, they say, like clerking in a store or minding other people's children or teaching sociology. And, once Mom or Dad has heated up the frozen food in the microwave or dumped the Chinese take-out on the table, members of the "family" either go off to separate entertainment centers or sit (dressed in their shorts and T-shirts, jeans, sweats, stretch-pants) just long enough to bolt down the food and argue over sports, politics, the weather, or anything else they have only experienced through television.

Catholics and Protestants retain only a dim memory of the sacred meal, but my Serbian Orthodox friends turn every holiday and saint's day into a festival. Serbs also have a unique religious custom known as the *krsna slava*, the celebration of the family saint. In preparation for the day, the family has the priest bless the house with prayers, holy water, and incense, or, if that is not possible, they bring *zito* and wine to the church to be blessed. The *zito,* made of boiled wheat, sugar, walnuts, and nutmeg, is offered to each guest, who first crosses himself then takes a spoonful of the dish, which commemorates the Death and Resurrection of Christ. On the day of the *slava*, the vigil lamp is lit before the icon of the family saint.

The guests (traditionally uninvited, though that custom has changed) gather around the table, and the host cuts a cross into the bottom of the *slavski kolac*, a tall bread, often braided and with a cross impressed into the top. This *kolac*, which has been made with holy water, is broken and shared by the guests, as members of the family contemplate whether they have lived a Christian life. After a prayer—often the family and guests stand and recite the Lord's Prayer—the participants get down to the serious eating: an endless round of antipasto—salamis, cheese, pickled peppers; a special *sarma* made with liver, heart, rice wrapped in a membrane—a sort of Serbian haggis; roast pork and, perhaps, lamb (unless it is the feast of Saint Nicholas or of another saint whose day falls within a fasting period). Red wine is drunk to commemorate the Blood of Christ that washes away our sins. And although variety and plenty is the normal rule, even the poorest family may celebrate a *slava* so long as there is the wheat, red wine, the icon, and so long as, in their hearts, they are determined to lead a Christian life.

For human beings, eating is a social act. Of course, we must occasionally dine alone, but a normal person will rarely enjoy a solitary meal. (How dismal must be the condemned man's final steak, fries, and ice cream, since he cannot share it with his mates on death row!) In my travels, if I am alone, I often return to the same restaurant, because a familiar place takes some of the sting out of eating

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alone. Eating is one of the three necessities of human life, and all three—eating to sustain life, having sex to continue life, and fighting to defend life—require other people. A rich gourmet who likes to dine alone might as well make love to himself.

I first began to appreciate the problem presented by American individualism when I had Thanksgiving dinner with a family of eccentrics. They had little or no connection to the small community where their house was located—they had picked the town, decades earlier, by throwing a dart at a map, and most of them had long since scattered across the country. They had picked their religions with almost the same insouciance: one was a Buddhist; another, an atheist humanist; another (the only apparently sane member of the tribe), an Episcopalian; and another (a girl I had known in school), a Jew, and not merely a Jew but a rabbi.

The turkey had no sooner hit the table than the atheist uncle seized a plate and, grunting "This for me?" and filling it with turkey and trimmings, walked over to the television set where he proceeded to engage in a quarrel with Walter Cronkite (too conservative) throughout the entire dinner, which, after this rocky start, went rapidly downhill.

To restore the meal to its proper place, we need not convert to Serbian Orthodoxy. The Christian West has its own traditions, though most of us have forgotten them: the Twelfth Night cake with the lucky coin that makes the finder the master of the revels; the skeleton-shaped cookies that Mexicans bring to the graves of their ancestors on All Souls' Day; the St. Joseph's altar of foods that is still popular among Southern Italians, who used to visit each other's homes in a daylong progressive dinner. It is still a day commemorated with special doughnuts (and closed museums), even in modern Rome.

Anglicans, Lutherans, and Catholics all have rich traditions to draw upon, and if churches were to quit poisoning parishioners with pancake-mix breakfasts, commercial pre-sliced corned beef, and supermarket sheet cakes confected of soybean oil and library paste, they might recover the real foods (to say nothing of the actual doctrines) of their religious traditions.

"He ate like a Christian" is ancient shorthand for being civilized, and eating like a Christian—like charity—should begin at home. Paul refers repeatedly to Christian homes that are actually churches, and the Serbian tradition of *krsna slava* is a direct outgrowth of this early custom. If every home is a church, blessed or prayed over by priest or preacher, then every family dinner becomes a sacred meal. If your neopagan friends are embarrassed by the grace you say before meat, perhaps they may reflect on what they have lost. Living and eating with non-Christians is, alas, a part of everyday life. Ordinary Christians are not called upon to be monks or to separate themselves into settlements and fortified compounds into which no alien influence can penetrate. Christ is the Light of the World, not a tiny candle whose feeble rays are horded by a tinier band of followers. When Clement of Alexandria advised against eating with pagans, he went well beyond Saints Peter and Paul.

Early Christian apologists were understandably drawn to asceticism and to separating themselves from their pagan neighbors. Clement (in his *Paedagogus*) makes the best case he can against eating well, but all he can cite are proof texts against gluttony and wastefulness—he is not so quick to recall the fatted calf slain for the Prodigal Son or the barbecued kids and lambs and oxen offered up so often in the Old Testament, which offers scant comfort to vegetarians and puritans. Food is, admittedly, only a means to an end—"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith"—but a good feast is not to be despised, even as a metaphor: "All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast."

When our Lord was rebuked by the scribes and Pharisees for eating with publicans and sinners, He told them, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance," and when the same legalists and kill-joys complained that His disciples did not fast, He did not deny that fasting was a good thing but told them that, "so long as the bridegroom is with them, they cannot fast." Christians, therefore, commemorate the suffering and Death of Jesus by fasting, but to recall His life among us, we keep the feast.

Saint Peter, as an observant Jew, was understandably reluctant to eat with Cornelius, the God-fearing but uncircumcised centurion, but he had been given a vision of a great sheet on which were depicted all the beasts of the earth and fowls of the air.

> And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

We fast, not because we are forbidden to eat meat or because meat is bad, but as a discipline, to deprive ourselves, temporarily, of one good thing that we may come to know a better one. Eating lamb (or ham, if you are German or Polish) at Easter is a great joy, because we have longed for it throughout the long weeks of Lent and also because, in commemorating the reality of the Lord who is always with us, we can taste of the mundane joys that foreshadow the spiritual joys that are prepared for the faithful.

John the Baptist, in calling for repentance, ate wild locust and honey, but Jesus, the Bread of Life, is seen eating bread, helping fishermen to a good haul (both in His earthly life and after His Resurrection), feeding the multitudes on bread and fish, feasting on the paschal lamb. His first recorded miracle takes place at the wedding feast in Cana, where he transformed water into *excellent* wine. Some modern Pharisees reverse the miracle by turning the wine into grape juice.

Perhaps to make sure that we did not become too spiritual in our religion, the risen Christ appeared to His disciples in human flesh, and, in the village of Emmaus, "he took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them," and after "he was known in breaking of bread," He appeared to them in Jerusalem, and, to reassure them, He ate "a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb."

Though there is many a gourmet who might long for a fresh grilled fish and a taste of honey, Clement of Alexandria twists this passage into a condemnation of boiled meat and elaborate sweets, as if nothing in Scripture is literally true. In the sensate pagan world, it made good sense to warn Christians against the temptations of the flesh, but we must also be on guard against the greater temptations of the spirit. Gnostics, Arians, Jansenists, and Puritans tell us to despise the good life that has been given us and to pretend that we can be angels or, in some cases, even gods. We know that it was for us poor mortals that Christ our Lord was sacrificed. "Therefore let us keep the feast . . ."

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Listening to the New Apartment House

Richard Moore

A voice above the derricks and the diggers
had words for me about their rules and rigors:
"To use our new machines, gentlemen, we
ideally shall become machinery.
Earth shall be redefined, benumbed reposer,
to that which can be moved: by a bulldozer.
Everything else earth might have been or meant
is hereby now proclaimed irrelevant
and all those stupid ways we'd meditate it
gathered in one magnificent *I hate it!*"

Tornado

Richard Moore

There is an emptiness that drives
        us through our lives
like the black funnel that came down,
        tore through the town,

and put a value on our gambles,
        left them a shambles.
O Lord, must we not let them sound us,
        whirling around us?

The day my Tanta Minna died
        she put aside
her coffee cup, in her heart holding
        springtime unfolding,

forgot what everything was for,
        and was no more.

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by Roger D. McGrath

Mexican in Name Only

For several years, Charles Truxillo, a professor at the University of New Mexico, has been proclaiming that the American Southwest will—and should—be reconquered by Mexico through massive immigration. Most politicians and media have either ignored Truxillo or tried to characterize him as an isolated extremist, claiming that most Mexican immigrants have no political agenda and cross the border only to find work.

A Zogby International poll, however, conducted in Mexico at the end of May, suggests that Truxillo's views reflect those of the majority of Mexicans. A startling 58 percent of Mexicans claimed "that the territory of the U.S. Southwest rightfully belongs to Mexico" and an equally startling 57 percent thought that they "should have the right to enter the United States without U.S. permission." Welcome to the mainstream, Professor Truxillo.

The Southwest has been formally a part of the United States since 1848, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, and informally since 1846, when the region was occupied by American troops. That's more than 150 years. How long was it Mexican? All of 26 years. Before that, it was Spanish, and before that, it was turf contested by dozens of tribes of American Indians. Moreover, Spain (and, later, Mexico) occupied less than one percent of the vast region.

California, the part of the Southwest that Mexicans have entered illegally in greater numbers than any other, was never more than nominally Mexican. Spain did not colonize California until 1769 and only did so then because she feared Russian encroachment if the area were left unoccupied. By the mid-1770's, colonization had meant nothing more than a couple of presidios and five missions. By the end of the Spanish period, the number of presidios had increased to four and the number of missions, to 21.

These outposts and the few pueblos that Spain founded clung to the California coast from San Diego to San Francisco Bay. No settlements penetrated California's interior or reached north of Sonoma. Most of California was uninhabited and generally untouched by Spaniards. So superficial and infrequent was their contact with the Sierra foothills that they even failed to discover the greatest placer deposits of gold on earth. Nor did they take any action against a Russian settlement, Fort Ross, on the coast just north of Bodega Bay. Built in 1812 and occupied for 40 years by the Russian-American Fur Company, the fort's population occasionally exceeded 400, making it California's third-largest settlement in 1820, behind Los Angeles (at 650) and Monterey, the capitol of the province, at 700. There was no San Francisco but only a tiny village, Yerba Buena, on the site. The population of California, other than Indians, was just over 3,000.

In 1822, word reached California that Mexico had won her independence from Spain. Nonetheless, Mexico did not bother to send a governor to California for more than three years, and the province enjoyed a quasi-independence that would characterize it throughout the Mexican period. Again and again, Mexican governors were run out of the province, and local Californians were elevated to the governorship. Americans residing in California, frequently former mountain men, were recruited to aid in these *coups d'etat*.

Typical was Tennessean Isaac Graham, a veteran frontiersman. In support of Juan Bautista Alvarado, he organized a band of American mountain men and sailors in 1836 and, together with a force of local Californians, marched to the Monterey presidio and demanded the garrison's surrender. The troops complied with alacrity. The governor barricaded himself in his house, but when a cannonball struck one of the structure's walls, he, too, surrendered posthaste. Alvarado assumed power, and California was declared a "free and sovereign state."

For a couple of years, a local Californian would control the government—what little there was. For a year or two, an appointed Mexican governor would rule. There were times when both a Mexican and a Californian would govern simultaneously from different parts of the state. There were times when nobody governed. On one occasion, California was split into northern and southern halves. During another period, the capitol was moved to San Diego, then Los Angeles, then back to Monterey. In 1842, Comdr. Tom Jones, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet (all of seven small ships), misinterpreted his orders and determined that Monterey was to be captured. It didn't take much. A landing party seized the surprised troops at the Monterey presidio and raised the Stars and Stripes. Commodore Jones came ashore and declared California annexed to the United States. Two days later, after learning of his error and lowering the American flag, Jones was wined and dined by California's governor.

By the early 1840's, many of California's leading citizens were advocating annexation to the United States or independence with American protection. They had no love for Mexico and called themselves "*Californios*" rather than "Mexicans." At the same time, hundreds of American sailors, artisans, and businessmen had settled along the coast, and hundreds of American frontiersmen, in California's interior valleys. By 1846, Americans made up a quarter of the non-Indian population, and more were arriving every day. Meanwhile, Mexico had failed repeatedly in efforts to send settlers to California. By the time the Mexican War erupted in Texas, California was on the verge of becoming American.

When Comdr. John Sloat sailed into Monterey Bay in July 1846, California surrendered peacefully. A few minor skirmishes and one battle occurred in southern California after the surrender, but those engagements were the result of the brusque and authoritarian manner of Marine Lt. Archibald Gillespie and his declaration of martial law in Los Angeles. Two years later, California was formally part of the United States after having been Mexican, and tenuously at that, for only 26 years.

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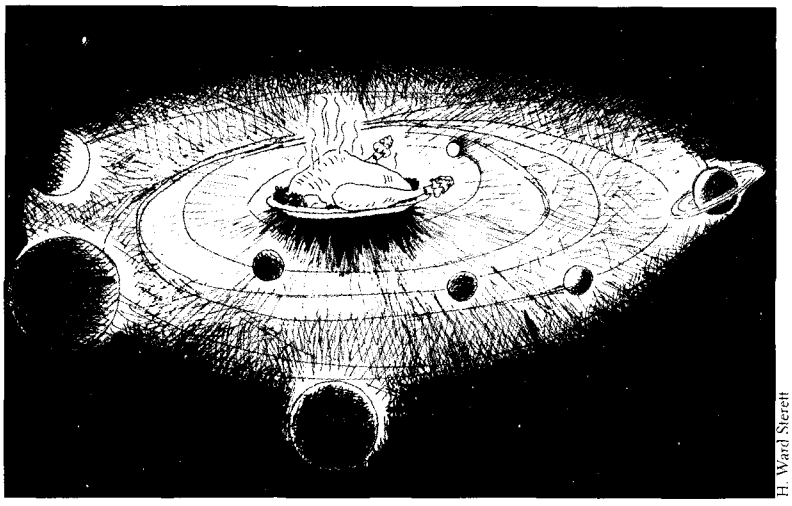
Food Fight

Have It Your Way

by J.O. Tate



H. Ward Sterett

Is anyone who thinks, as I do, that "dim sum" is Chinese for "damn soon" or that "sushi" is Japanese for "bait" even remotely qualified to write on food? Actually, I often volunteer unsolicited comments, more or less printable, as the case may be. I have noticed that the most thoughtful people I know prefer to talk about food rather than about ideas, and I regard that cultivated shortcoming as a point of wisdom. I think that what might seem to be an excessive preoccupation with food is a political statement of a kind. The politics of food is a register of history and "dialectical materialism," and we would need a Karl Marx and a Max Weber and a Thorstein Veblen, as well as a Marvin Harris, even to begin to account for it.

Food became, as we passed the hunter-gatherer period, an index of human relations. Ancient societies were organized around food production (as well they should have been), and I enjoy thinking about traces of Chaldean beer, foodstuffs in the tombs of the pharaohs, and the *amphorae* that litter the floor of the Mediterranean. Food has been attached to religion and to magical rituals, as well as to mere self-indulgence. A few of the more notorious Roman emperors liked ice, hand-delivered from the Alps, to cool their drinks, and who can blame them? Capri is, after all, rather warm in August. The *Satyricon* of Petronius, or what is left of it, said all that could be said about the decadence of Rome, and the vulgar feast of the *nouveau-riche* ex-slave, Trimalchio, was to inspire F. Scott Fitzgerald when he wanted to represent the Roaring Twenties, for he knew that we still live in the shadow of Rome. We can sense in this image of the gross feast a blurring of the distinction between magnanimity and waste and the unity of the political and the gastronomic.

Now, there is a lot to say about geography and climate, about the social stratification of ancient societies, about slavery and war as implied in the organization of agriculture, and so on. But I am not going to say it, because, as a register of politics and as a natural symbol, food itself says everything to us, without any need for explanation. When the prayer says, "Give us this day our daily bread," we get the picture. Jesus did not neglect to multiply the loaves and the fishes (a particular winner as a miracle, if you ask me), and He presided over the Last Supper, or seder. But skipping ahead 15 or so centuries, we find that, as modernity loomed on the horizon, food was a way of indicating something that can be more easily intuited than explained. Rabelais showed what he meant, rather than asserting it, through the actions and the names of Gargantua and Grangoussier. Shakespeare spoke volumes when Malvolio was rebuked for his haughty puritanism—there would still be cakes and ale, at least for some. The banquet scene (punning on Banquo's name, or is it the other way around?) says it all about the Macbeths, for if there is no festivity at the feast, then why presume to royalty, or even live? Closer to our own day, Charles Dickens made food central to his vision of community, as when Scrooge finally orders a turkey for the Cratchits. But for Dickens, orality was not without darker and even grotesque implications, as Prof. Harry

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Stone has forcefully argued.

But to return to the Bard: It is no wonder that so many want to prove that Shakespeare was not Shakespeare, for his freedom of imagination and relaxed mastery of expression amount to an overwhelming embarrassment. How easily he represents the ignobility of Claudius, with his phony toasting and loud cannonshots. The poisoned wine in the last scene of *Hamlet* is even more offensive to our sense of what is right than the unbated and poisoned foil. Perhaps most of all in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare projects a vision of the Mediterranean world in which we see a prophecy of our own inherited cultural split. The world of fecundity and pleasure is in the East and South, in the oldest civilization on those shores. The new bureaucratic puritanism of the North and West is represented by the passionless, humorless Octavius. Again and again, as in *Twelfth Night* and *Henry IV*, Shakespeare rings the changes on Aesop's fable of the grasshopper and the ant. The future is with the ants, of course, but the departing glory is in the music and the pleasure-loving ways of the grasshopper. Shakespeare's outrageous recreations of the past are even better as prophecies of the future, as the ultimate politics of food plays itself out in our time. "What sport tonight?" asks Antony—a finer question, even in his bibulous and degraded state, than "What's on TV?"

Shakespeare sensed the divided future that was forming. The split would take the form of a new dichotomy, between the South and East—embodied by the Catholic cultures of Italy, France, and Spain—and the North and West of the Protestant cultures of Germany, England, Scotland, and Scandinavia. Here is where the politics of food works as an effective indicator. Would you rather eat in Genoa or perhaps in Bordeaux, or would you rather eat in Glasgow or even in Uppsala? Even to ask this question is to answer it, and that in itself shows a certain dissociation of sensibility. We have the values of Presbyterian lawyers but prefer the tastes of Catholic artisans. This is the most interesting or subtle of cultural-culinary clashes, but it is not the most important of food fights. I only wish it were.

I have not altogether meant to imply by the phrase "food fight" the image of John Belushi in *Animal House*, as he trashes the cafeteria. I have in mind numerous other struggles. There is the Marxist approach, for example, which reductively would ask something like this: In each food-consuming encounter, who is doing the work, and who is doing the eating? Who is in control of the means of production? Such questions are enlightening to consider in these, our strange days, as we live *la vida loca*.

We live in a bizarre situation, in which the good and the bad are strangely mixed. The fast-food joint is across the street from the pseudo-French restaurant. The third-rate pizzeria in the suburban strip mall is next-door to the bagel joint. In short, there has been, in the last 40 years, an explosion of multicultural services. The spectra of food have gone from craze to craze. At the top, there has been enlightenment: Julia Child, James Beard, Paul Prudhomme, Irene Kuo, and others have led Americans to renewed, or just plain new, appreciation of fine food from around the world. At the same time, there has been a tremendous increase in the amount and the availability of imported items, luxury goods, and what have you, so that you can cook or enjoy at home things that were once only names in books. But the blessing of increased sophistication has not been unmixed, for confusion and snobbery go with it, and it is hard to know which is worse. All that is on one side.

On the other is the virtual disappearance of farming in this country, replaced by corporate agribusiness. What were formerly and quaintly known as "tomatoes" and "peaches" now resemble, in our freezing supermarkets, major-league baseballs. Going shopping for fruits and vegetables can be a grim business in America today. But if you get off the plane in Rome in July, just follow your nose. The sumptuous odors of *ripe* (an archaic word meaning "ripe") peaches and apricots and plums make themselves known to you soon enough, and are, in themselves, from 50 yards away, a virtually erotic experience. *Santa Cleopatra!* Back stateside, you realize that produce picked hard and green rots before it ripens, as America itself has done. ("By their fruits ye shall know them.") Renewed efforts are required for finding the good stuff or growing it yourself. ("Do I dare to eat a peach?") Ripeness is all.

> Peace and quiet and good companionship are as much of happiness as we can hope for in this vale of Pop Tarts, and teaching the young to appreciate the beauties of the table is one of the best things we can ever do.

Meanwhile, of course, there have been other developments. As Americans have accepted that all human needs must be adjusted to the advantage of big business in general and automobiles in particular, there has been a spectacular metastasis of fast food. Now, the point about fast food is not so much that it is *bad*—though, of course, it is that—but that it is *fast*. You are supposed to consume it more or less standing up or, if seated, to the tune of throbbing pop music. And this is the "fight" in "food fight": the struggle to avoid being dominated by others who want to take your money for giving you a hard time. You have had a good time, not a bad one, bomp bomp bomp, as loudness insists. And if, at this point, you do not fight, then you have given up, and you have been had. For everything that is anything in the experience of food, everything worth savoring and enjoying with others, has been destroyed in the totalitarian environment of fast food. In the fast lane, we can concede the need and even the appeal to the young, but it is no wonder that fast food has caused America to be despised, and rightly so. What is worse is that the ubiquity of recorded noise has been accepted in places where actual human beings would go, as in restaurants.

The excessive gap between street food and effete food—the stretch between the five-dollar lunch and the $500 dinner, as we find it in Manhattan, for example—is an illustration of everything that is wrong with this country. "Only connect"—but there is no identifiable American cuisine anymore, or, if there is, it is the fodder of discredited natives. What a shame that the internationally minded have persuaded us to believe that there was no good food in this country until it was filled with immigrants and dot-com millionaires. Those with memo-

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ries or any connection to the hinterland know what I am talking about.

But there are so many other aspects of the Eternal Struggle—feminism, for example. As an attack on the family and on human relations and particularly on women, it has been an aggression in the eternal food fight. "Labor-saving devices" and the requirement for two incomes to pay the taxes and maintain the cash flow have pretty much eliminated "dinner" (more properly known as "supper") from family life. Well, let it go. We need more time to watch the propaganda and the commercials on television, anyway. "Frozen food" (an interesting phrase) zaps nicely in the microwave, so what is the problem?

I seem to remember that all the trouble started with Fourier, who wanted to liberate women from housework by stuffing everybody in "phalanxes" (what we call "apartment houses"), with a communal kitchen downstairs. Fourier has conquered, not through socialism or communism, but under the aegis of consumer capitalism. The most shocking thing about the whole matter is that Fourier was French. He is not my favorite kind of Frenchman—he is too much in the Robespierre or Saint-Simon mold. I like much better Brillat-Savarin, who declared quite rightly that "The discovery of a new dish does more for human happiness than the discovery of a star." We can hardly imagine Brillat-Savarin, author of *La Physiologie du Goût* (1825), flipping burgers in the basement of some Soviet-style dormitory, though that is precisely what Fourier did imagine. French cuisine is still the most refined in the world, and that is a matter of demonstrable truth, not mere opinion. We are often provoked in America today, as inept poseurs impose themselves upon us, to remember the words of the Rev. Laurence Sterne: "They order, said I, this matter better in France." They still do, but though that makes for what Philip Marlowe once called a "jazzy weekend," such cannot be the answer to our particular difficulties; for in France, the food fight is well defined, and in America, it is not.

Those particular problems are inherent in our own culture and in our own follies, and we would do well to remember that those came—and come—from within, not from without. Ralph Waldo Emerson, whom I choose to blame for most of our cultural perversions, once declared that "A man is fed, not that he may be fed, but that he may work." Old Waldo was exactly wrong, as usual. He should have said something like this: "A man works so that he may be fed. Then he takes a nap so that he may be fed yet once more." But Waldo cannot be revised or corrected—he should, rather, be erased, for his individualist vision is incorrigible. There is no such thing as a man or a woman eating alone, or at least there should not be. Where are family and friends in this vision—watching reruns of *Sex and the City*? I think I will not be alone in asserting that, when we remember particular foods, we are recalling the circumstances in which we ate them, and with whom. We remember not so much the food as the occasion—the good times.

I remember distinctly some oxtail soup and *wiener schnitzel* at a rustic place in the Moselle valley of West Germany in 1954, and two others remember it as well. But do not ask me for the name of the place, because I will not tell. We must have had a good time there, and more than once. And I remember other such occasions, in which I learned something about the possibilities of human happiness on this side of the cemetery, in a mode in which recipes are not the point. I believe we all have memories like these, and the legitimate need for new opportunities for creating such memories. It is the quality of the experience, not the caliber of the food, that makes the difference. A humble encounter (chili slaw dog, Brazier Burger/Dairy Queen) can be the vehicle of a revelation, and let me point out that, for revelations, reservations are not accepted.

Some of my fondest culinary memories feature Italian food, both on this side of the pond and the other. In all cases, I remember well where and when, and I must frankly add that there was, in all of these memories, an element of cerebral excitement or elevation. I am not talking about Ellio's Frozen Pizza, for heaven's sake, but about the construction and the consumption of the simplest and the best pastas, surrounded by the sound of popping corks, continual professorial references to history and to the nuances of glorious regional cultures, and even a subdued background of Bellini and Donizetti. Such moments may be among the best of a lifetime—or at least of mine. And we could all mention many others, and maybe we should.

But I think we are at the point of defining the food fight, and that battle is not the struggle for a biological sufficiency of calories and vitamins in order to survive. The food fight is the struggle to maintain and to create moments for happiness—the rightful privilege to be exempt, at least sometimes, from imposition, noise, and agitprop. The food fight can mean throwing down your napkin and walking out when some servant of indeterminate sex announces, "My name is Bruce, and I'll be your waitperson tonight." The food fight can mean leaving a dinner party when the conversation becomes Beltway blather. The food fight can mean summoning the manager of some freezing supermarket and demanding to know the meaning of the latest outrage. The food fight may mean recalling how Don Corleone in *The Godfather* got shot while carefully selecting fruit to take home, or remembering how to make sauce when you go to the mattresses, or not forgetting the cannoli. So the food fight can mean driving 30 miles one way to obtain seasonal fruits and vegetables, or the food fight can mean realizing that "organic" food may also be genetically modified. Everyone fights the food fight every day, and too many people are on the wrong side.

But the food fight has an end, and that end is not to fight. Peace and quiet and good companionship are as much of happiness as we can hope for in this vale of Pop Tarts, and teaching the young to appreciate the beauties of the table is one of the best things we can ever do, for the young are endlessly instructed by the powers today that the table—and the home—is an oppression. The opposite is true. The invasion of the table and the usurpation of the home is the oppression foisted upon us by gross ideology that is broadcast by every vibration of our environment. Besides, children do not like to be nagged about their table manners perhaps because they need to be, but good manners are one of the noblest of human refinements. We recognize good manners exactly when we do not notice them, and we value our best friends for letting us be in a mutually constituted relation with them. And that means, sooner or later, eating with them in harmony.

Finally, let me pose a riddle as it was posed to me by an unlikely source of insight or humor: a Marxist professor who has a sailboat and a sports car and his share of appreciation of the amenities. He asked me, "What did the Buddhist say at the hot dog stand?" "I give up," was all I could reply. With a wink, he told me the answer—and the last word on the food fight: "Make me one with everything."

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Southern Gastronomical Unity

We'll Rally Round the Grits

by William Murchison

Why don't y'all try to guess—go ahead—which American region, in its unofficial anthem, celebrates food. Answer? The South. Permit me, Suh:

> Dar's buckwheat cakes and Injun batter,
> Makes you fat or a little fatter,
> Look away! Look, away! Look away! Dixieland.

You see? We have been in the eating business a long time down here, and even if the author of the song in question, one Daniel D. Emmett, was a damyankee, he was not a totally unenlightened one. He sensed somehow or other what mattered in Dixieland. Food mattered then and matters now. All kinds of food, from buckwheat cakes to black-eyed peas, with stops along the way for ham hocks, cream gravy, collard greens, oysters, field corn, jambalaya, fried chicken, catfish, barbecue, pot liquor, hot buttered biscuits, rice, Tabasco sauce, spareribs, hush puppies, and she-crab soup. To imagine even a celestial portion of it is to fill the nostrils with imaginary aromas and the eyes with genuine tears. Eat away! Eat away!

Living anywhere south of the Mason-Dixon Line means eating particular things particularly well. At least that was our universal experience up to the advent of imports like the Big Mac and take-out Szechwan noodles. Even these distinctly non-Dixie products we have, to some extent, blended into our rituals. Southerners are famously adaptive. We have gone so far, if you please, as to appropriate Sauteed Escargot and Duck in Toasted Garlic Red Wine Sauce with Butternut Squash, Brie Tart, and Tarragon Horseradish Drizzle.

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But I was speaking of ritual. Food is ritual everywhere, no doubt, in some sense or another. Southerners are not the sole proprietors. But oh, how we relish it at our table. (Observe the sly, typically Southern insertion of a food trope—"relish"—in this context.)

Ritual is the Way Things Are Done. It is a conservative instinct. We do things in a certain way because that is the way we do things—always making room for marginal improvements, *à la* Edmund Burke. There is piety in this manner of leading life. Piety is a Southern speciality, like grits. It would have been unnatural had feelings of reverence been chased out of the kitchen with a large rolling pin. They never were.

It started with the cultural setting, though Southerners would hardly have spoken in such a high-toned-sociology-seminar sort of way. Food in the South is/was for the gathered—the nuclear family first of all, then the cousins and aunts, then the "club," then—well, you take it from there, wide as you care to set the markers.

Edna Lewis, the cookbook author and specialist in Southern cooking, writes of food as the "bond" of her onetime rural and black community in Virginia—"gathering wild strawberries, canning, rendering lard, finding walnuts, picking persimmons, making fruitcake." It was what the people of Freetown did together.

Another small example: the ritual, practiced in my wife's family a few decades ago, of the Day After Christmas Gumbo. This dish was produced by a relatively tight circle in a large extended family in Galveston: German and Creole predominantly, by way of southern Louisiana and like exotic venues. Into an immense blue-and-white Granitewear pot, somewhere around midday, went pretty much everything left over from Christmas dinner, along with appropriate seasonings. Membership cre-

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dentials in the select society of December 26 gumbo chefs were a puzzle—a matter for family speculation. A member seemed to recognize himself and the other members as well. Here again was pure, practically unspoken ritual. I might add that the ritual, duly modified, goes on. My wife procured the celebrated gumbo pot some years after death decimated the December 26 society. We use it to make our own Christmastime gumbo (albeit not on December 26). When not employing this honorable piece of equipment, we display it prominently on a kitchen shelf.

Another kind of ritual used to be performed diligently throughout the South in early and late summer, from countless kitchen or porch chairs, generally in a soft summer twilight, with crickets chirping and the first faint, cool breeze starting up. This was the ritual of the black-eyed pea shelling. Or it might be cream peas, no matter. The ultimate objective was, in due course, to gobble down the peas, boiled in bacon fat and onions. But there was a more immediate objective: conversation. A black-eyed-pea-shelling circle, so to speak, made up of about three, was ideal. There was never any shortage of family or community news—we called it news, not gossip—to dispense and digest. I cannot recall politics or religion intruding much on these refreshing occasions, unless the governor or the local Methodist pastor had exhibited notable dimness of wit. But many an errant uncle or cousin was put soundly in his place. A good black-eyed-pea shelling could take an hour, depending on the number of hands and pea pods. It could take longer. If you were going to do it at all, you might as well shell some extras for the Kraft Mayonnaise jar.

This particular ritual, I am sad to say, has ceased, done in by the high-speed pea-sheller. We now buy our peas shelled and ready to throw into the pot. What this chiefly means is that the "news" awaits the dinner hour.

Some amplification of the subject of black-eyed peas seems in order. Many would call grits the distinctive gastronomic product of the Southland: a continuing bafflement to the Northern folk as these hominy dried grains slide down the breakfast plate, right into the bacon. Grits are good. Shoot, grits can be wonderful. I hold out all the same for the black-eyed pea as our fundamental contribution to gastronomy. The great James Jackson Kilpatrick, late of the *Richmond News-Leader*, seconds the motion. Kilpo is given to celebrating the black-eye with resonance and wit, going so far as to elect himself Number One Pea, Pro Tempore, of the Black-Eyed Pea Society of America. "It is impossible sufficiently to laud the Noble Legume," he wrote once in a moment of uncharacteristic restraint on the subject.

Black-eyes go agreeably with every dish known to man. Moreover, the going lasts through the entirety of summer, when peas start to arrive fresh from the fields. There is a kind of blessed assurance in the knowledge that, whatever may befall a Southerner during July and August, the black-eyed pea will be available to console and refresh.

It goes beyond that. In Texas, and likely other places as well, we single out Kilpo's Noble Legume every New Year's Day, when the eating of at least a token portion—for good luck, as we say—becomes a savory duty: a duty performed all the more pleasantly with a side of ham and a spoonful of redeye gravy. This duty I still enforce on our household, even after discovering that the New Year's black-eyed pea ritual began only during the Depression—I had imagined Adam and Eve had something to do with it—as a strategy for the promotion of black-eyed peas. Let that go. What would a Southerner wish to promote in place of the black-eyed pea? The Hoagie?

That is enough (for now, anyway) about black-eyes. Back to the larger matter—how Southerners eat.

A particular characteristic of old-fashioned Southern cuisine was heft—sheer bulk. Our food lay long and languorously on the stomach after the midday meal formerly called "dinner," now known as "lunch." Long before obesity became the newest fixation of the professional reformers, Southerners woofed down meals that would send any self-respecting fitness expert into a swoon. As Ben Robertson related in *Red Hills and Cotton*,

> We had red gravy in bowls and wide platters filled with thick slices of ham, smoked and cured and fried, and we had fried eggs right from the nests . . . At my grandfather's house at noontime we had soup and two or three kinds of meat, fried chicken, fried ham, or spareribs or liver pudding; and we had four or five vegetables and a dessert or so and fruit.

Food of this character (leaving aside buckwheat cakes and Injun batter) rarely went to fat. The Southerner worked or walked it off. You never met fat—pardon me, generously proportioned—Southerners with the frequency you encountered Upper Midwesterners of more than ordinary girth. Food, however mouth-watering, was fuel first of all—except, of course, in Louisiana, where it early on attained religious status.

In a way, old-style eating amounted to playing catch-up ball. There had plainly been times when food in the South was hard to come by, despite the land's natural bounty. Humanitarians like General Sherman had taken care of that. More than one generation of Southerners in the 30's licked dry lips as Scarlett O'Hara uprooted and crunched down the turnip in Tara's back garden. "As God is my witness," Katie Scarlett vowed, "I'll never be hungry again." Ben Robertson would write: "My grandparents never forgot Lee's surrender and the days of starvation in the South, and neither of them ever allowed any of us at their house to waste rations. 'You can eat whatever you like and as much as you like,' my grandmother told us, 'but what you take on your plate you must finish.'" The Depression fortified this commonsensible view of life, which I myself heard propounded as late as the 1950's.

The South is a broad and varied land. Needless to say, experiences, memories, and gastronomic tastes have always varied to some degree. Texans love chili, but I would not give long odds on finding a decent "bowl of red" in Atlanta. Likely as not, if you did chance upon such a dish there, the wretch of a cook would have mingled good meat with pinto beans. (I pause to let the horrific thought sink in.)

Texans slice their barbecue off dead cows, North Carolinians, off dead pigs. Nobody but nobody excels Louisianans in the preparation of gumbo. As I have already noted, food is religion in Louisiana—thanks, no doubt, to the French influence. A New Orleans restaurant like Galatoire's or Commander's Palace is a temple; its chefs are the high priests. Notwithstanding that Texas lies cheek to jowl with Louisiana, and that Texans love to eat, you rarely find in the Lone Star State comparable devotion to food as fine art.

For all that, the essential cultural unity of the South (a unity that transcends mere race) has provided some gastronomic uni-

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ty. Grits might be less likely to turn up on breakfast plates in Texas than in Virginia, but Southerners in general appreciate the general idea of grits and rejoice to find them offered at Sunday buffets, preferably drenched in cheese. Everyone, it should suffice to say, loves barbecue with smelly onions.

All the same, I must issue a few words of caution and admonition. The gastronomic unity of which I speak is not what it used to be. All right, *nothing* is what it used to be. But I have watched the South change mightily in recent decades, along with the rest of the country. We must own up: Not even the black-eyed pea—sniff, sniff—enjoys the profound allegiance it formerly commanded.

Several changes must be noted. One is the decline of the family meal across America. We Southerners are not alone in this. The family meal—to cite just one of its achievements—focused the family's attention on the same cuisine. All ate the same thing at the same time. Not anymore, or, at any rate, not to the same extent. Too many extraneous preoccupations compete with the communal sharing of grits and peas.

Too many new foods compete likewise with grits and peas, and with ham and catfish and collard greens. Americans are caught up as never before in the Pleasures of the Table. This is partly because never before have so many pleasures been so widely available at generally affordable prices. What is new and maybe also exotic turns out to be the very thing we want tonight: come to think of it, for lunch. Much of the new food is of the "fast" variety—Domino's, Little Caesar's, Jack in the Box, Taco Bueno. Such are the lives we lead. It takes hours to cook a ham. A trip to Subway gets you ham on a sandwich bun, with dressing, provolone, and sliced onions. Not bad. But not Southern. Sigh.

More—I hope to be forgiven for putting it thus—respectable and proper cuisines also vie for our attention. Oriental is here in a big way. Vietnamese restaurants, in particular, are all over the place; so also Thai. Indian establishments serve up not fried but Tandoori chicken. Within all these various places of business, it seems safe to infer, not a single proprietor or chef or waiter or maitre d' has ever voluntarily boiled a pot of grits. Certainly, no one would think of offering them on the menu. The possibilities for going through Southern life gritless seem to expand and enlarge almost daily.

Since the 60's, a large number of the Northern brothers and sisters have taken up residence in our midst, further diluting our established culinary commitments. The bagel has taken us by storm. You can slather practically anything atop it. Calories are minimal. The current Greater Dallas Yellow Pages lists no fewer than 33 bagel outlets. Nor is this counting supermarkets—virtually all of which bake their own bagels or import the chain-store varieties. What would Jeb Stuart make of the bagel? What would Thomas Nelson Page? It probably does not do to wonder.

Slack must nevertheless be cut for a non-Southern cuisine that, in fact, is demonstrably—even historically—Southern. I speak of Mexican food. Mex—the Texan shorthand for this wonderful and simple cuisine—has been with us since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. The Mexicans, as we Celts cheerfully acknowledge, got here first. Mexico's early-20th-century revolutions and civil wars precipitated more and more Mexicans into the regions north, east, and west of San Antonio. They brought with them their food, suitably adapted to place and time. Enchiladas, tacos, frijoles, guacamole, and tostadas with salsa are a part of the environment in Texas—as fundamental to the good life as ever black-eyed peas were accounted. Tex demands his Mex several times a month. It has been confessed by some that a week without Mex is like Christmas with no bonus—bleakly unthinkable.

Mex entered the South-at-large only randomly and slowly, but it now turns up regularly from the Rio Grande to the Potomac. That is progress of a sort. Texans, when out of town, need their Mex. Hunting hard, I found it in Memphis 35 years ago. It was awful. Still, it was Mex. Same with the offerings at an out-of-the-way cafeteria in Palo Alto, California, almost 40 years ago. It, too, was awful. But it was Mex.

Texans are like that. We will defend in any gathering of Southern gourmands Mexican food's proper place in the gastronomic constellation. Whereby, perhaps, we make a key admission. Southern cuisine is that which Southerners eat. Which is to say, the commitment to eat a particular dish precedes the preparation.

What is prepared can change over time. *Has* changed, in my own longish lifetime as a Southerner. Will continue to change. Buckwheat cakes and Injun batter no longer (if they ever did) define the universe of Southern gastronomy.

Yet I think, in the main, we are adding, not subtracting; building on the past, not uprooting it. The kingdom of the black-eyed pea is shrinking, but at the Dallas farmers' market I find peas prominently displayed and hungrily sought after. Who we are now is a function of who we have been: consumers of what the Book of Common Prayer calls the "kindly fruits of the earth"—the Southern earth, in our own blessed case. If we are indeed what we eat, why, then, Suh, who would want ever to be anything but a loyal, well-fed, somewhat satiated son or daughter of the Southland? c

The Leader: A Study in Steadiness

Richard Moore

Because he's free of wit and whim
and feels for you, you follow him.
He has no problems of his own;
or if he does, they're not well known.

With yours, thus freed, you sense him cope,
absolute as a gyroscope.
Who cares if he, with secret sinning
humming within, is madly spinning?

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The Diner's Refrain

Caught Between the Moon and New York City

by Tony Outhwaite

H. Ward Sterett

With former president Bill Clinton settled into his new headquarters on New York's 125th Street, in central Harlem, the danger for the culinary crowd is that he may now take to hanging out at Sylvia's, the famous soul-food restaurant barely three blocks away on Lenox Avenue near 126th.

For almost 40 years, the family-owned restaurant has been celebrated for its homestyle meatloaf, spare ribs, candied sweet potatoes, and other dishes long popular with black diners. The possibility that Clinton—inveterate, self-professed know-it-all—might feel compelled to offer advice on the menu should strike terror into the hearts of the management (one or two of whom are actually Republicans) since, with Bubba's involvement, Lord only knows what might happen. Pretending to do research for his rumored TV cooking show, "The Recidivist Gourmet," he may suggest that the collards be replaced by something of dubious origin called "Castle Grande Greens" and that the restaurant be compelled, perhaps under threat of an IRS audit, to buy all its chickens directly from his pal Don Tyson, who will begin turning up in New York unannounced, clamoring for free drinks at the bar.

This cannot be good. As with popular television shows, a change in concept, even when heralded as "evolution," generally brings with it declining ratings and ultimate disaster. And in New York City, where restaurants serve additionally as clubhouses for business and social gatherings, no one wants to treat his guests to lunch at a place whose fortunes are suddenly in a nosedive because of bad advice from outsiders. Fortunately, a top-quality chef such as Jean-Jacques Rachou, owner of the classic La Cote Basque, would not put up with Jean-Marie Le Pen heckling his dessert chef with "suggestions," nor would Danny Meyer, owner of several popular Flatiron area restaurants, including The Union Square Café and Gramercy Tavern, take kindly to demands, from the likes of Bob Guccione and James Brown, that he hire an accordionist to work the happy-hour crowd. A successful restaurateur, even if suddenly presented with the personal sauce recipes of Pope Urban VIII—and the Thirty Years' War of 1618-1648 was hardly a noteworthy era for sauces—knows that, with his reputation on the line, it is best to beware.

There is an unverifiable rumor, passed down through generations of literary critics like some precious nugget of information known only to initiates of the Order of the Knights of St. John, that the renowned Greek writer Plutarch, during a cocktail party in Thessaloniki in A.D. 91, scrawled on a bar napkin the words: "If that little pimp of a restaurant-garage attendant puts one more dent in my Studebaker, I'm taking him down!" Is this the forgotten stuff of legend? Apocryphal? In the same category as Noam Chomsky's delusions about Cambodia or September 11?

Perhaps, but consider this: What if Plutarch's puzzling comment referred to the fact that, in the restaurant game as in many other areas, the presence of the celebrity, the odd man out, was actually bad for business? When, in late spring 2001, the restaurant Ouest opened on Manhattan's Upper West Side to excellent reviews, the legitimate gourmet clientele was quickly infiltrated by starlets, Kato Kaelin look-alikes, and near-bankrupt dot-com moguls, all wanting to be seen at a classy new spot and, no doubt, unnerving to the serious diners. And, sure enough,

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Tony Outhwaite, a literary agent in New York City, is completing work on Organ Rooms, *a book about the jazz-organ circuit, to be published in late 2003.*

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among the newcomers was former First Predator Bill Clinton, who turned up with a party that included his wife the senator and whose rumored after-dinner discussion with the manager, over what was reported to be several bottles of Clinton's personal stock of Hamm's Beer, created considerable gossip. Were they swapping barbecue recipes? Chuckling over stories of youthful girl-chasing escapades? Or, on a more sinister note, might Bubba have been counseling a wholesale overhaul of the decor to make it resemble one of his favorite Hot Springs watering holes of the 1960's? The lesson for all restaurant professionals to bear in mind is that the food must always be most important above all else, with schmoozing of celebrities a very distant second. To put it another way, while you are out front hobnobbing with Phil Rizzuto and Cher, in the kitchen, the sous-chef might be tampering with the Bearnaise sauce behind your back and betting on the ponies with your delivery-boy tip money.

Today, even for a management team with good sense, running a restaurant in New York City is more perilous than ever. For one thing, relying on celebrities to provide trendiness has its drawbacks, among them the extraordinary liquor bills some of them can run up in the course of a single evening and, perhaps worse, the fact that a devoted clientele may disappear completely if someone famous is seen anywhere near the front window of a rival's bistro. Virtually overnight, a room that might have entertained, in a single evening, Donald Trump, Alan Greenspan, and Sigourney Weaver is reduced to a backwater where one is forced to share a banquette with Scott Baio, Sergeant Flynn from the Fifth Precinct, and retired stagehands from *The George Gobel Show*. Whenever that happens, it is not long before the owner is deputizing members of his wait staff to hand-deliver frozen pizzas to rap stars' bodyguards backstage at the Hucklebuck Lounge and changing the name of his own place every other weekend to throw food critics with drinking problems off the scent.

Leaving aside the erratic sensibilities and uncertain personal hygiene of some restaurant reviewers, the process of deciding what and where to eat in New York City has become immensely complicated, with countless possibilities for humiliation, disgrace, and, in the worst-case scenario, ptomaine. Even those social commentators who lament the passing of the era of elaborate socialite dinner parties in one's own home for a small circle of 600 friends realize that, today, preparing dinner for a tiny group of six brings with it enough reflection, preparation, and anxiety to induce night sweats in each and every negotiator at a Kosovo peace conference. There are too many crucial determinations to be made—imagining, for example, the near riot that would ensue should a closeted vegan on the guest list encounter a serving of squab might, of itself, prompt a host to scrap the whole idea, phone the nearest kebab house, and squire the whole crew downtown for a fine meal of sweet-and-sour goat. Yet the "essential question," to use the great fraud Jean-Paul Sartre's favorite catch-all description, is that restaurant dining brings an even more intricate set of questions. Not just type of cuisine but neighborhood, decor, placement of table and seat, and even dress are all key decisions. During the 1970's, it was common to see, in the classiest restaurants, bar patrons clad in jeans, sandals, and T-shirts inscribed with such *bons mots* as "I Kayaked the Mekong With Abbie Hoffman and He's My Friend"; today, however, the fashion statement at the best eateries has shifted back to more traditional outfits—or at least coat and tie for men, certainly enough to spook that member of the entourage who cannot wait to rush home from the office to change into deadbeat attire. And if the possibility of a guest's aversion to meat, fish, poultry, dairy products—indeed, anything less "organic" than seaweed—is not enough to paralyze everyone with indecision, there remains always, hovering in the air like a colorless and odorless deadly gas, the ongoing row over smoking—the likelihood that, 80 feet across a well-ventilated room, a dowdy, self-righteous harridan lurks, possibly armed and certainly ready to denounce at top volume any flagrant assault on her health by a member of the oppressive patriarchal brotherhood. In this situation, not even the owner gets off the hook, reduced to sneaking an occasional Guatemalan cigar outside his own kitchen door, next to discarded fish scales and piles of trampled broccoli.

> In today's New York City, the fragmentation of social and cultural rituals has also placed a great strain on friendship, and, where meals are concerned, there are strange new opportunities for misunderstandings.

There are many variables to consider: Is a certain type of cuisine suddenly very trendy? Do you choose the type of cuisine first and then decide on a neighborhood and restaurant that suits? Or get everyone all fired up for a pilgrimage to Soho, Tribeca, or Little Italy and then prowl the streets upon arrival, looking for that Zimbabwean fish restaurant that appeals to all—the flounder, the bream, the xindook, all things of beauty and prepared personally by the owner, Fondu Salaam, whose name could be translated as "cheese of peace" (although, with that fillet knife in his belt, perhaps it is better not to remind him). And even if everyone can finally agree on a certain restaurant, the chosen place might be jammed with raucous merrymakers swilling Old Milwaukee or *raki* or some unmentionable liqueur made from parrot droppings, necessitating a bribe to a haughty maitre d' with the improbable name of Rauf—by day, a struggling performance artist—and then a modest wait of 75 minutes before seating. Yet, even with these many imponderables, some of the old reliables of cuisine are still venerated: the snails, the *moules*, the *scampi*, the 45-ounce New York sirloin, the 26 different mysterious condiments at Indian restaurants—and the winners seem still to be French, Italian, and, more recently, a type of vaguely Continental cuisine with even vaguer Asian influences.

Thus, for many, the first decision to be made, before setting out for the evening, becomes a choice between a real Italian or French meal or a type of hybrid cuisine prepared at a new and unheralded room by a chef just in from a lesser position in Scottsdale, Tegucigalpa, or Rangoon, and whose stock in trade turns out to be a peanut-lime chipotle sauce drizzled over everything, including the chocolate mousse cake. The "influences"

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so dear to gourmet chefs and writers about food are, in some cases, precisely those elements likely to reduce someone in the party to a gagging, snivelling wreck incapable of digesting anything stronger than Mylanta and tap water for 72 hours.

Whatever the general consensus on type of cuisine, the next step is to go about choosing a spot and, more precisely, a strategy most likely to get everyone in the front door. Perhaps the plan is to scan the newspapers, attempt through subterfuge or outright intimidation to weasel a reservation at the newest hotspot and catch the buzz of newly anointed genius. There is nothing wrong with this as long as you strike quickly, so that you are still riding the establishment's hot streak on the night of the meal itself. The celebrated *New Yorker* critic A.J. Liebling once wrote of a Frenchman whose Westchester bistro had declined to such an extent by the following Fourth of July that the featured entree was jellied oysters dyed red, white, and blue: The host, despondent over the outrageous amounts of alcohol consumed by the clientele before dinner, had developed the attitude that "at least they're aware of that, the colors attract their attention."

Comedian Jackie Mason once commented that the only reason to go to the ballet is to come home from the ballet and tell everyone that you have been to the ballet. Even there, to many of the elite, the critical issue is the location of your seat, whereas a real baseball fan would relish being at any game at Yankee Stadium even if he had to watch through heavy lenses from the rear of Section 38, in the left-field upper deck. The restaurant crowd in New York, however, does not deal well with this type of thing: Any attempt to seat one of the "ladies who lunch" at a rear table near the kitchen, or too close to the front door, or next to a couple dressed like Vikings will prompt immediate phone calls to Liz Smith and Cindy Adams, and the resulting abuse could be enough to sink the business right there. For this type of diner, the most important element is not the quality of the *gigot* nor the consistency of the *creme brulee* but the perfect color scheme of tablecloths, napkins, floral arrangements, blouses, scarves, and Bermuda bags. Everything else is secondary.

Dining out is complicated and expensive enough without the added burden of pleasing all in the party whose tastes involve criteria as dissimilar as type of food, location, and prominence—although not necessarily quality—of restaurant, decor, expense, and size of portion. For every running mate with a genuine fondness for good food in attractive surroundings, there may be a chum whose only preoccupation, beyond never being forced to dine south of 59th Street, is a serving large enough to require not one but two doggy bags in order to get home to the apartment with leftovers sufficient for two nights of nonstop television watching, after putting away enough goodies during the meal itself to treat the entire homeless population of Fort Wayne, Indiana, to an excellent Easter supper.

Unfortunately, in today's New York City, the fragmentation of social and cultural rituals has also placed a great strain on friendship, and, where meals are concerned, there are strange new opportunities for misunderstandings. Every city dweller has a story about the type of acquaintance who usually eats a solitary meal at home, wolfing down Chinese take-out from a cardboard box with plastic cutlery, and who, reciprocating for an earlier invitation to a delicious dinner in a well-appointed restaurant, drags his guests to a seedy beanery where coupons from a supermarket handout are exchanged for plates of warmed-over tapas, the barman's name is not Andre or Jean-Louis but Iggy—by day, a struggling performance artist—the house white wine is decanted from what resembles a 55-gallon drum labeled "Iggy's House White Wine," and the dessert menu reads like a document captured during a raid on Al Qaeda headquarters in Kermanshah, Iran: "choice of 22 flammable items, no substitutions." The modern social scene also involves an altered concept of hospitality, sometimes because of a host's refusal to tidy up his apartment before the arrival of guests, forcing them to sit surrounded by irascible one-eyed cats the size of pumas, yellowing newspapers from 1928, and a personally annotated baseball-card collection from the 1950's. Friends of this type of reluctant host should prepare for impromptu calls to an evening at McDonald's, where the ringleader can munch Big Macs and gobble greasy fries out of waxed paper, not even up to the level of the roundtables at the coffee shop on *Seinfeld*.

Years ago, a diner could count on various ethnic neighborhoods with many restaurants of varying quality and comfort, and there are still Chinatown and Little Italy—Southern Italian restaurants on the north side of Mulberry Street, Northern Italian restaurants on the south side of Mulberry (a little insiders' joke to confuse the tourists). In the New York of the new millennium, though, there are not many other such enclaves except for small areas like Little Senegal, around 110th Street and Amsterdam, or Little Brazil, along West 45th Street. The string of Greek restaurants that, years ago, sat along Ninth Avenue in the 20's has disappeared, and there is not much left of the small Ukrainian section in the East Village, though there is talk of a proposed strip along Avenue "D" nearby to be known informally as "Little Paraguay," where confidantes of deposed dictators Alfredo Stroessner and Andres Rodriguez allegedly plan to build a large complex with colorful ethnic restaurants, lively dance halls, and shops where some of the old palace guard will sell handicrafts and hang out drinking 170-proof tequila distilled from the larvae of indigenous up-country moths.

Perhaps it is a good thing that today, on the other hand, there are restaurants of all types scattered all over town—not merely French and Italian and that mysterious Continental-Asian but Egyptian, Armenian, Turkish, Lebanese, Ethiopian, Indonesian, and many other national cuisines. A discriminating diner does not need to play hooky from the office, stalking the South Bronx or Bensonhurst to locate a Bolivian neighborhood in which to sample choice native goodies, but can, instead, find a perfectly decent plate of hummus during a drinking bout at the upstairs bar at Sultan Mehmed's Mosque, just around the corner from F.A.O. Schwartz, or an excellent Italian meal just about anywhere in surroundings populated by extras from the closing mob-conference scene in the Robert DeNiro-Billy Crystal comedy *Analyze This*. Whatever your tastes, though, there is no denying that the New York dining scene in 2002 is eclectic, with such a variety of dining spots that it is possible to eat at a different place every night. Such a campaign would be good for the restaurants, for the diners, and especially for the horde of personal trainers brought in to instruct the perpetually hungry on how to burn off the millions of extra calories. The most difficult part of dining in New York these days, apart from the extra money necessary to pay the horrendous credit-card bills, is keeping track of those haunted locations where no restaurant of any type ever succeeds, where eventually the realtor's sign, placed in a darkened front window after the latest fiasco, is amended to read "No Food."

Beppo's. Formerly Giulio's. Formerly Nunzio's. This is never good. c

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Graham Crackers, Corn Flakes, and Other Grrrrreat American Heresies

by Aaron D. Wolf

H. Ward Sterett

"Dad," the inquisitive youngster is bound to ask, "where do corn flakes come from?" In today's economy, where farms are something you drive by on your way to Disneyland, the most common answer might be "Kroger" or "the 7-Eleven" instead of "from the farm, son, from cornfields." The real answer, which you would most certainly refrain from giving to a wide-eyed toddler, is that the Seventh Day Adventists, an American cult, invented breakfast cereal in order that it might purify them for the Second Coming of Jesus by helping them to move their bowels regularly and to keep them from having marital intercourse and masturbating. Further reflection is in order.

America, the great melting pot that has come to resemble more a wastewater treatment facility than a good gumbo, has had a particularly unique recipe for cultural change. First, a real societal problem is identified, caused, in some manner, by the American experience on the frontier (say, public drunkenness and rabblerousing). Next, some sort of dissenter's heresy is confected, either in the British Isles or on American soil (say, temperance). Then the two are added together by a wild-eyed inventor in the form of a product (say, Welch's Grape Juice or Coca-Cola). Next, the product is secularized, corporatized, bureaucratized, and traded on the New York Stock Exchange. Finally, it is shipped round the world, from most-favored nations such as Red China to Third World countries such as Mexico and India. God is in His Heaven, and all is right with the world.

Such is the case with corn flakes, the instant breakfast staple found on tables everywhere from Milan to Minsk.

In mid-19th-century America, the great societal problem was dyspepsia, the gastronomical malady that, today, we call "indigestion." It was, doubtless, true that farmers toiling from predawn to dusk in the fields could eat pork three times daily and live a happy life, until they had the big one at 60 and died behind the plow. In antebellum America, farmers faced something that their ancestors in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland had almost never faced: too much food, particularly meat. Hogs, especially, were plentiful and were, more often than not, fried in their own renderings and garnished with their own gravy for three meals every day. Salt pork, bacon, and ham were main courses, with dumplings, pies, and cakes on the side. Those more fortunate also had beef on their tables. Add to that gallons of coffee, tea, and whiskey, and you have the original All-American Meal. Gone were the communities and customs of the Old World—the habits and traditions that not only bound together the culture of the ancestors of early Americans, but kept them, let us say, unbound, as well.

When the sons and daughters of farmers left the countryside for the city, they opted for a sedentary life while retaining their rural diets. These diets were high-fat and vegetable-restricted and required a fair amount of physical labor in order to be digested properly. Town markets and city shops reflected the abundance of the farms, and pork came from the barrel instead of the pen or the smokehouse. To make matters worse, Americans had learned to woof down their dinners at high speed, further complicating digestion. There was, after all, work to be done. No time for conversation. Americans were on the move.

During the Dyspeptic Age, doctors provided no real corrective to these poor health habits, and so this was also the era of the snake-oil salesman, the quack, the great-granddaddy of Professor Harold Hill. Something called "dyspeptic bitters," castor oil, and other placebos were offered to cure indigestion. Eating fruits and vegetables was frowned upon, and many patients groaned with gout and languished with a lack of energy, the stress of hypertension, and fever and dehydration.

The mid-19th century was also the Era of the Crusading Victorian Woman. The heart religion of the Second Great Awak-

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ening had produced a feminist culture that viewed every social ill in terms of a search-and-destroy mission. Drunkenness, laziness, licentiousness, and dyspepsia—real problems resulting from the breakdown of civilization in frontier communities—were blamed on a patriarchal society of booze, pigs, slaves, and sex. These upper-class women, to a man, fought every good fight if they fought one. And, for them, the ultimate expression of all of these societal problems was the denial of the franchise to the female sex.

Ellen White was one such protosuffragette. Born Ellen Gould in Maine in 1927, she fell under the spell of the apocalyptic teachings of William Miller, one of the many prophets of the burned-over districts of Upstate New York. (Others include Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormons, and John Humphrey Noyes of the utopian Oneida community.) The Millerites, as they were first called, or the Adventists, as they were later known, were the first to reject the postmillennial vision of America that had been brought to the colonies by the Puritans in exchange for the idea that the events of the Book of Revelation were yet to unfold, a position that came to be known as premillennialism. Miller, calculating the signs of the times, proclaimed 1843 to be the year of the Second Coming of Christ—which came, in 1844, to be known as "the Great Disappointment," for obvious reasons. Undismayed, young Ellen married an Adventist preacher and began to receive prophetic visions of her own, including a confirmation from the Almighty that Saturday is the day of rest, not Sunday. After being run out of several towns, Mother White and her husband wound up on the frontier, in Battle Creek, Michigan. There, Mother White and her husband began a church that spawned the movement known as "Seventh Day Adventism."

True Christians, Mother White taught, needed to be purified in order to be ready for the Lord's return. Americans had become sex-crazed gluttons who were addicted to self-gratification. Those whose feeble intellects were incapable of following the bizarre biblical exegesis of the Seventh Day Adventists were deemed muddle-headed because of sex and greasy, spicy food. In fact, the good Lord told her, food is the cause of it all, for it is greasy meat that strengthens the "animal propensities" in man. Three visits to the pork barrel every day creates a wanton sex fiend bent on gratifying his lusts in any manner available.

A great deal of "health" literature was already available for Mother White to read, then recirculate as her latest vision from the Lord. She read water-cure journals and the writings of the Grahamites. Sylvester Graham, who died in 1851, had made a name for himself by blaming society's ills on refined flour. Graham believed that, by returning to flour containing bran and by avoiding meat, everything from cholera to "the vice" would be eliminated. Brown flour began to be called "Graham flour," from which the famous Graham crackers were made. Heretofore, the Grahamites were considered nut-cases, but Ellen White was able to convince her flock that these teachings were the very Word of God.

Under divine direction, Mother White established the Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek and patronized a young man named John Harvey Kellogg, who would, upon the completion of his studies in hydrotherapy, electric-shock therapy, and surgery, return to take the helm of the Institute, renaming it the Battle Creek Medical and Surgical Sanitarium, better known among hipster health nuts as "The San." Kellogg transformed The San into America's first health resort, combining exercise and diet with apocalyptic theology and odd applications of the latest findings of "science." According to Scott Bruce's and Bill Crawford's *Cerealizing of America*, by the original Gay 90's, The San was a "560-foot long, six-story tall modified Italian Renaissance edifice, complete with a solarium, a large gymnasium, half a mile of glassed-in halls, an Acidophilus Milk Bar, and a Palm Garden with banana and rubber trees" in which patients endured "laughing exercises," exercise classes, and hours on vibrating chairs. "They bathed endlessly inside and out—with salt baths, steam baths, hot water baths, cold-water baths, showers, douches, fomentations, and a high-powered enema machine that could put fifteen gallons of water through the bowels in a matter of minutes." Kellogg himself insisted that his assistant administer him an enema after each meal.

Despite this rigor, the real challenge—the real pain of The San—was breakfast. No bacon, no eggs, no fried potatoes, no cheese, no gravy. Nothing but gruel, porridge, milk toast, and boiled rice with syrup. In addition to their unfriendliness to the palate, these dishes were labor intensive in preparation. Dr. Kellogg struggled to create a breakfast food that would be both healthy and easy to prepare. Under the same sort of inspiration as Ellen White, Kellogg recalled a produce he had ingested during his travels among the health-conscious: "Granula," the 1863 invention of Dr. James A. Jackson of Dansville, New York, consisted of twice-baked chunks of Graham crackers ground into little bite-sized nuggets that had to be soaked in milk overnight to avoid chipping a tooth. Kellogg then "invented" a breakfast cereal he called "Granula," consisting of twice-baked Graham crackers. After the inevitable lawsuit, he creatively changed the name to "Granola."

Still, for Zion's dyspeptics, these proto-Grape Nuts were too fortified to be enjoyed. Kellogg toiled feverously in his laboratory, hoping to create a breakfast staple that could be used by patients at The San and shipped to former patients around the nation. It was not until 1895 that Dr. Kellogg and his brother, Will Keith (W.K.), after John Harvey awakened from a divine vision, had the idea of running boiled, softened wheat through a dough-rolling machine, then scraping it off with a knife and baking it. Success! The Kelloggs named these ready-to-eat wheat flakes "Granose"—because it sounded scientific—and debuted them at the General Conference of the Seventh Day Adventists in early 1895 at The San. Granose was an instant hit, consumed first by the faithful, then—despite clandestine production efforts at the Sanitas Food Company of the Kelloggs—copied by dozens of imitators all over Battle Creek, most notably by the sometime psychic and former San patient C.W. Post.

The San burned to the ground in 1902 around the same time that Mother White began to believe John Harvey was getting too big for his britches. By then, the Sanitas Company and its neighbors had developed the technology for grinding corn, and were cranking out corn flakes—which tasted better than Granose—24 hours a day. And W.K. Kellogg's Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Company (now Kellogg's) is still cranking out cereal. Of course, doing the Lord's work in America today means pleasing the stockholders, as evidenced by the 2002 Kellogg "mission statement": "Kellogg is a global company committed to building long-term growth in volume and profit and to enhancing its worldwide leadership position by providing nutritious food products of superior value." Americans, thanks to cereal, have apparently been cured of wanton lust and dyspepsia, and can now focus on nationbuilding via factory-produced food products. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

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When Immigration Becomes Migration

by E. Christian Kopff

"San Pietro si fece la barba prima per sé e poi per gli altri."
("Saint Peter shaved himself first and then other people.")
—A proverb from Lazio, near Rome

L'invasione silenziosa. L'immigrazionismo: risorsa o complotto?
by Alberto Carosa and Guido Vignelli
Rome: Il Minotauro; 159 pp., €13.00

◆

Americans believe that they are unusual. They use the word "unique" as a term of praise so often that it has lost its status as a superlative and now means "very good." This feeling is so pervasive in the United States that scholars have even coined the phrase "American Exceptionalism" to describe it. The policies of Global Free Trade and Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, however, are forcing Americans to confront conditions that face the rest of the world. Pat Buchanan was right to devote several chapters of his recent bestseller, *The Death of the West*, to intellectual and population trends in Europe because we have much to learn from taking seriously the problems of Europe and its peoples.

The Silent Invasion. The Politics of Immigration: Resource or Conspiracy? begins by mentioning the events of September 11. Its Italian Catholic authors, Alberto Carosa and Guido Vignelli, devote thoughtful pages to the implications of that terrible day. As they note, however, the problems raised by immigration existed before then. In an interview in the *International Herald Tribune* (February 2, 2001), Samuel Huntington called mass immigration "the central question

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of our times" and explicitly linked "immigration, instability and terrorism." The Harvard professor did not have access to memos that escaped President Bush. He simply foresaw the likely results of consistent policies.

Defenders of immigration in the United States treat it as another aspect of American Exceptionalism. The United States, they say, is unlike other countries because it is a nation of immigrants, dedicated to a proposition and enriched through the magic of free trade. The historic American republic, however, was shaped by the traditions of English common law, classical republicanism, and Protestant Christianity. The Founding Fathers viewed the religious wisdom and political freedoms they valued and fought for as legacies handed down from the distant past. (In addition, the wealth and stability created by the wizard Protectionism is rapidly disappearing now that his magic wand has fallen into the hands of his sorcerer's apprentice, Global Free Trade.)

Immigration fanatics cry for open borders in Italy just as frenetically as they do in the United States. Americans suspicious of the catastrophic nature of that policy will be well advised to get their hands on *The Silent Invasion*. Both authors write with admirable vigor and clarity, and their two essays are well-delivered punches to immigration's jaw. Carosa's "Immigration: Myth or Menace?" is a fine example of investigative journalism, backed up with convincing stories and citations. Vignelli's "The Politics of Immigration: A Project to Tribalize Europe?" shows the coherence of the forces in favor of mass immigration, despite their theoretical disagreements. He refutes their notions with a profound knowledge of traditional ethical theory and Catholic social doctrine.

Immigration confronts Italy with challenges similar to those that America faces. Muslims in Italy, like Mexicans in the United States, come to stay and take over. Islam, Carosa points out, lays perpetual claim to any country or parcel of land it once possessed. When a community gives Muslims permission to build a mosque, it is giving up that land forever, under Islamic law. Osama bin Laden has called the Christian liberation of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella "the tragedy of Andalusia." Muslims expect to get it back, and Islamic immigration into Europe through Spain and Italy means this is no impossible dream. In the United States, franker Mexicans talk of doing to California and the American Southwest what Sam Houston and Davy

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Crockett did to Texas: move in and take it over. This is not immigration; it is migration, as Carosa says.

The right and left counterpunches of the immigration lobby are the argument from economic inevitability and multiculturalism. As Edward Abbey put it, "conservatives love their cheap labor; liberals love their cheap cause." By "conservatives," of course, Abbey meant economic reductionists and free-market extremists, not people who view the market as a valuable tool to defend and promote nations and traditional geographic and religious communities.

Capitalists, nationalists, and localists can work together against the traditional left. This is clearer in Italy than in the United States, because each group has its own party. The leftist coalition that ran Italy and promoted mass immigration through most of the 1990's was dominated by communists, who had changed the name of their party to the "Democratic Party of the Left." The rightist coalition that now governs Italy is dominated by a real (and very successful) businessman, Silvio Berlusconi, with the support of the nationalist National Alliance and the localist Northern League. Berlusconi listens to his allies and has worked to limit immigration. He even had the nerve to praise Western civilization openly, thus drawing upon himself the wrath of the leaders of the European Union. The nature of American political parties makes clear distinctions and significant compromise more difficult. If American capitalists and nationalists each had their own party, George Bush would be negotiating openly with Colorado congressman Tom Tancredo, exchanging, for instance, fast-track privileges for a freeze on immigration.

In Italy as in the United States, the majority of the population wants reasonable limits on immigration for a variety of reasons, ranging from protecting their jobs to protecting their culture to protecting their lives and property from crime. (Vignelli has good sections entitled "From Illegal to Criminal" and "Immigrant Crime and Ethnic Civil War.") The forces ranged against the majority are strategically placed. They include "cheap labor" capitalists, leftists who hate Western civilization and want to see it replaced by a utopian multicultural regime, and religious leaders. Carosa has a solid but brief paragraph entitled "A Sorry Note: The Church's Responsibility." Vignelli devotes much of his essay to Church leaders who advocate policies that would overwhelm Italy and its traditional Catholic culture. In 1991, Roger Cardinal Etchegaray wrote,

> now that the European community is preparing to open its internal boundaries, it would be crazy [*insensato*] to turn Europe into a comfortable fortress closed in the faces of the immigrants and refugees that are pressing against its doors.

In a speech delivered on May 26, 1990, Carlo Maria Cardinal Martini, archbishop of Milan, declared that mass immigration from poor (and often non-Christian) nations is desirable because it would

> reverse the decadence of consumerism now active in Western Europe. . . . The West must transform the welcoming of immigrants into racial, cultural and religious integration, favoring the rise in Europe of a multiracial and multicultural society.

Cardinal Martini's vision of morally superior immigrants arriving to rescue Western Europeans from "consumerism" is a constant theme of sacerdotal immigrationists. In 2000, Fr. Antonio Mazzi, a frequent speaker on Italian television, repeated the argument. "I would rather talk to believers of another religion," he told the press, "than those who believe only in money and consumerism." If immigration is so likely to sound the death knell of consumerism, it is strange that so many capitalists and E.U. bureaucrats are in favor of it. While capitalists claim that immigrants are driven from their homes and families by economic necessity, Cardinal Martini, Father Mazzi, and their American counterparts predict that immigrants will save Italians from consumerism and teach Americans, by their good example, to be better family men. It seems to me that they would set a better example by staying with their families in their own countries instead of hawking sunglasses in front of the Castel Sant'Angelo or flipping burgers in fast-food joints in the United States. Neither capitalists nor priests are ashamed to repeat over and over again their two contradictory mantras for immigration.

Vignelli responds to these Church leaders by reminding them of basic principles of Catholic social doctrine, which go back to Plato and Aristotle, *suum cuique* and *prima sibi caritas*: "to each his own" and "charity begins at home." Giving away your children's patrimony to strangers is not Christian charity. "According to the natural law as interpreted in the light of the Western juridical tradition," Carosa explains, "the universal right of emigration is valid to the degree that it is compatible with the universal right of social residence on your own land." Immigrating to—"invading," if you will—a land that is uninhabited or partially inhabited by nomads is different

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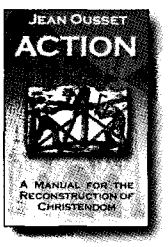

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from invading "a nation like Italy with a precise and homogenous cultural identity created in 27 centuries of western, and then Christian, civilization." Don Baget Bozzo, writing in *Il Giornale* (April 8, 2000), explained the problem:

> For some time the Church's magisterium has not been speaking with the rigorous language of tradition, on which the Church's social doctrine is founded. The result is a popular conviction that in order for a political position to agree with Catholic principles it must consider the right of emigration to prevail in the name of need over the right to live on your own land.

Some Catholic leaders have spoken out against the perversion of the Church's social doctrine. Msgr. Alessandro Maggiolini wrote in 1998 that "there is no human right to invade Italy and no duty for Italians to allow their country to be invaded." Giacomo Cardinal Biffi, archbishop of Bologna, created a stir on September 12, 2000, by writing that

> The criteria for admitting immigrants can never be just economic. It is necessary to concern oneself seriously with saving the nation's own identity. Italy is not a deserted land, without history, without living and vital traditions, without an unmistakable cultural and spiritual physiognomy, to be populated indiscriminately, as if it were not a model legacy of humanism and culture that must not be allowed to disappear.

The left was shocked when the Vatican not only refused to repudiate these statements but allowed Angelo Cardinal Sodano, the Vatican secretary of state, to issue a statement calling Biffi's words "wise, very wise." Leftists had every reason to be surprised. Pope John Paul II has consistently spoken in favor of a natural right to migrate—for example, in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, "Man has a right to leave his native land for various reasons—and also the right to return—in order to seek better conditions of life in another country." The Pope's October 1989 address at Yankee Stadium seemed to many a call to America to permit a policy of mass immigration amounting to open borders. In his encyclical *Ecclesia in America*, he wrote,

> The Church in America must be a vigilant advocate, defending against any unjust restriction the natural right of individual persons to move freely within their own nation and from one nation to another. Attention must be called to the rights of migrants and their families and to respect for their human dignity, even in cases of non-legal immigration.

There is enough room in this statement to allow John Paul to escape by the skin of his teeth the charge of repudiation of the Church's traditional social teaching, but ordinary Catholics take away from words such as these the notion that the Pope is defending "the right of migrants and their families . . . in cases of non-legal immigration."

Cardinal Martini is not the only ecclesiastical spokesman for multiculturalism, which, as Carosa and Vignelli point out, is an integral part of the left's assault on Western civilization. The Committee on Migration of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops says, in their *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us*, that "The church embraces the rich diversity of this immigrant nation—what some call its 'multicultural' reality." A footnote to this sentence explains, "The call for 'incorporation' articulated in this letter . . . is not a call for 'assimilation.'"

They are speaking on good authority. In his address for World Migration Day, July 16, 1985, John Paul II said,

> The immigrant members of the church, while freely exercising their rights and duties and being in full ecclesiastical communion in the particular churches, feeling themselves Christians and brothers toward all, must be able to remain completely themselves as far as language, culture, liturgy and spirituality and particular traditions are concerned.

As Carosa and Vignelli show, the Catholic Christian Democrats who governed Italy from the late 1940's to the late 80's set up a situation that the communist-dominated governments of the 90's exploited to expand immigration into Italy. The Catholic welfare organization Caritas continues to work for increasing immigration despite its own devastating statistics about the negative consequences Italy is suffering from the policies it advocates.

Carosa and Vignelli demonstrate that open-border attitudes are not supported by Catholic social doctrine. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* is quite clear on the role of nations in the divine economy:

> After the unity of the human race was shattered by sin God at once sought to save humanity part by part. The covenant with Noah after the flood gives expression to the principle of the divine economy toward the "nations," in other words, towards men grouped "in their lands, each with [its] own language, by their families, in their nations." . . . It is intended to limit the pride of fallen humanity united only in its perverse ambition to forge its own unity as at Babel.

Catholics in Italy face a difficult choice: Do they follow the Bible and their Church's traditional social doctrine regarding immigration, or do they reject both to follow the clear implications of the words and actions of the U.S. bishops, Cardinal Martini, and Pope John Paul II? They cannot have it both ways. Unless the next Supreme Pontiff is Giacomo Biffi (*magari!*), Italians who remain loyal to their nation are naturally going to look with suspicion upon a hierarchy that holds the same positions on immigration as the Italian "former" Communist Party and the *Wall Street Journal*.

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The Moral Economy

by Tobias Lanz

The New Agrarianism: Land, Culture, and the Community of Life
edited by Eric T. Freyfogle
Washington, D.C.: Island Press;
256 pp., $40.00

◆

The decline of the household economy is one of the most significant economic changes in post-World War II America. Unfortunately, it has received relatively little attention. Professional economists find it trivial compared to the workings of large-scale institutions and global economies, while the average American sees only a positive development that has meant greater mobility, money, and freedom from menial labor. However, the seemingly benign death of the household economy has produced serious social ills. *The New Agrarianism* makes the connection between them explicit. Once human labor is removed from its ancient objects—the household, the community, and the land—a social pathology of cynicism and destruction ensues. To overcome it, modern agrarians advocate more socially intimate ways of living and working, ways that are also resource-efficient and aesthetically pleasing.

Contemporary agrarianism builds upon a long tradition of agrarian radicalism in Western history going back to ancient Greece. In recent times, agrarian thinkers have represented a wide range of political and philosophical opinion. Whether from right or left, however, they have virtually always operated outside the political and intellectual mainstream. Throughout the 20th century, agrarianism has been strongly identified with social and cultural conservatism. Eric Freyfogle, in his Introduction to *The New Agrarianism*, reviews the last several generations of agrarian thought, making ample reference to the contribution of the Southern Agrarians, the English Distributists, and such latter-day agrarians such as Richard M. Weaver and M.E. Bradford. Like their forebears, contemporary agrarians are deeply conservative with respect to economics and community life. They are also suspicious of social engineering and progressive views of history. Naturally, their view of social change is incremental rather than revolutionary. However, modern agrarians spend less time than their predecessors did in describing the virtues of past agrarian civilizations: Theirs is a more practical response to the contemporary problems of urbanism, industrialism, and consumerism. As such, they are less political than older generations of agrarian writers. They are also less inclined to defend agrarianism in the name of Western civilization and its religious and cultural traditions.

The pieces assembled in this book represent some of the best agrarian writings of the last dozen years. Many of the writers are farmers, others scholars and teachers, but almost all are experienced practitioners who live the life they preach. Freyfogle has collected 15 essays on a wide range of topics, from the virtues of agrarian life to practical issues. The first section, which accounts for almost half of the book, is the most substantive. Beginning with a piece by Scott Russell Sanders, who profiles agronomist Wes Jackson and his pioneering work on a type of sustainable agriculture patterned on native biocommunities, this section introduces the reader to agrarian ideas expressly designed to be put into practice in a world dominated by big business, big government, and the consumer culture. In a similar vein, small-scale farmer Gene Logsdon points out the fallacies of "bigness" in agriculture, explaining that it has nothing to with efficiency but is, rather, all about power. Logsdon's own practices have consistently shown that small operations are more efficient and more ecologically sound than larger ones. Environmental-studies professor David Orr concludes the section with a critique of the modern city, in which he advocates better design as a means of creating more sustainable ways of living. This requires not only new practices but a whole new set of concepts. Unfortunately, Orr argues, the language to disseminate agrarian ideas and others promoting an ecologically sustainable agriculture has not been fully developed, especially when compared to the powerful vocabularies that have grown up around sex, technology, and consumerism.

Section Two, presenting critiques of modern industrial culture, is summed up by environmental historian Donald Worster in his concluding piece, "The Wealth of Nature," in which he debunks historian Lynne White's now infamous argument that Judeo-Christian civilization is responsible for modern environmental problems. Instead, Worster sees their root in a materialist philosophy that had its greatest expression in the ideas of Adam Smith. Worster's way out of the materialist morass, although vaguely stated, is a return to a more holistic and spiritual way of life. The book ends with accounts of people who have lived successfully as agrarians, the most illuminating being that by Amish farmer David Kline, who provides impressions of his own life, which is based on simplicity, faith, and hard work. The book's most poignant essay, however, is Wendell Berry's "The Whole Horse," a rejoinder to Allen Tate's famous "Half a Horse" metaphor in *I'll Take My Stand*, in which Tate laments the abstraction and spiritual incompleteness of modern society. Berry emphasizes that the whole horse can only come into being in an agrarian culture. He also reiterates one of the Southern Agrarians' main points: Agrarianism is not just about agriculture; it is the economic counter to industrialism. Berry ends with a paradox, asking why conservatives and conservationists are not closer allies since both groups are deeply passionate about defending what is most severely threatened by modernization: traditional society and the natural world in which it struggles to survive.

While the main focus of all of these writers remains the family farm, they are concerned more broadly with the separation of *all* work from the home. It is not just farming but virtually every economic activity that has been abandoned as a family enterprise–from cooking and cleaning to sewing and child-rearing. Thus, it is no accident that, with its collapse as a unit of economic production, the household has been transformed almost completely into a unit of consumption. Once self-reliant, the household today is dependent on the market for its very survival. In this economy, work is no longer a spiritual or ethical pursuit but a means to wealth and status. (For most Americans, it is simply a way of increasing consumption.) The tragedy, of course, is that people must now spend more and more time working away from home in order to maintain their consumption levels. Many do not even eat at home anymore; home has been reduced to a rest stop where we watch television and sleep.

The consumer cancer affects nature as well, from the obvious despoliation of

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land, air, and water to the more subtle impact on human health. Perhaps the most noticeable health problem in America is obesity. Americans are the fattest people on earth, perhaps in all of history. Much of the reason for this has to do with the mechanization of our society, in which machines have largely replaced human labor. But obesity is also linked to the collapse of family farms. Today's large farms overproduce. They are so productive, in fact, that they can be enormously wasteful and, at the same time, produce enough to keep food prices low. Low prices, coupled with an ever-expanding menu of tasty items, have created an American food culture that can only be defined as orgiastic. Food is no longer about nourishment; it is a form of entertainment. For the refined, eating is a dining experience; for the masses, a means to overcome boredom. Sadly enough, eating is one of the last connections modern man has to nature. Like sex, it has been so thoroughly severed from the process of life and death that it has become perverted. When food was connected with survival, it was celebrated. Eating was a spiritual act: People prayed over their food to express communion and to thank God for the privilege of being able to eat. But saying grace seems almost absurd in a society that can split atoms, splice genes, and supply a thousand varieties of snack food.

The basic argument of *The New Agrarians* is that, if the gap between production and consumption can be reduced, American families will be able to recover a modicum of economic sovereignty and sanity. By refocusing on the importance of household economics, agrarians are not seeking to inaugurate an agrarian Golden Age but to create a viable economic alternative to bloated and bureaucratized capitalism. The main philosophical principle underlying agrarian economics is the idea of social subsidiarity. Only when simpler forms of human organization and technology fail should more complex forms be called upon. With a dual emphasis on small-scale organization and private property, an agrarian economy is probably the closest thing to a truly free market. Such an economy may not produce great wealth, but it does foster strong and stable communities. It also allows economy and ecology to merge more closely than in any other economic philosophy. Unlike modern environmentalism, however, agrarianism views the physical environment as more than a playground or an aesthetic experience. Nature is where man lives and works. And, since nature is the cycle of life and death, it is treated with respect.

Unfortunately, one issue that this book and other recent agrarian writings have shunned is the obvious connection between the collapse of the household economy and mass migration. As capitalism expanded, American men and women left the household and the farm to pursue greater wealth and convenience in the city. And, as the household came apart, its components were readily commercialized on a mass scale to form much of what is commonly called the "service economy." The all-too-familiar result is an economy comprising huge national chains in food and dining, cleaning and washing, and—sadly enough—child and elder care. Even garage sales and flea markets have been economically standardized and nationalized. (What, after all, are Wal-Mart, K-Mart, and Target but corporately run bazaars?) What is omitted from this analysis is the condition that the mass consumer economy requires an equally massive body of cheap labor to perform the dirty, degrading, and often dangerous work that all of these industries depend on for their survival—agriculture especially and, in particular, the meat industry, where human laborers and animals alike suffer from appalling conditions. Most of these laborers are immigrants, legal and otherwise. A greater reliance on self and family to supply economic needs would reduce the hoards of servant-slaves that Americans now depend on to sustain the lifestyle of maximum consumption.

This is one of the social costs of the modern capitalist economy, whose chief goal is expansion. As the juggernaut races across the globe, it obliterates all competing economic models in the quest to create a unified economic system—a total economy. The cultural losses of the process are all too familiar, yet agrarians argue that they cannot be separated from the material changes that modernization has wrought. Excessive reliance on technology and large institutions has abstracted humans from nature, which has led to nature's radical misuse. Agrarians want to change this situation. By returning to old-fashioned thrift, coupled with a greater dependence on the family and local resources, people can reduce their reliance on Leviathan. Based as it is on material minimalism, this idea amounts to a radically conservative approach to economic and social life. This dispensation, moreover, is inherently spiritual, inasmuch as it is under such conditions that the mind is ultimately freest to think, to imagine, and to pray. The agrarian economy is *the* moral economy, precisely because it allows our humanity to express itself most fully.

This is a compelling reason why paleoconservatives must make agrarian principles central to their economic and social philosophy. Failure to do so will keep these ideas at the social margin or, worse, allow them to be appropriated by the left. If that should occur, agrarianism will have become just another progressive idea, in which rural living is simply seen as one more alternative lifestyle threatened by "conservative" capitalism.

Tobias Lanz teaches politics at the University of South Carolina.

The Church Militant

by Thomas Fleming

Pope Pius VII, 1800-1823: His Life, Times and Struggle With Napoleon in the Aftermath of the French Revolution
by Robin Anderson
Rockford, IL: TAN Books;
219 pp., $16.50

◆

This is a difficult time to be a Catholic. The moral scandals in the Church, which should have provided an occasion for constructive change and for replacing the leftist American hierarchy with bishops of strong faith, pure morals, and sound theology, have only aggravated the divisions within the Church. Even many self-described traditionalists are taking advantage of the crisis to say "We told you so." Nothing good has happened since the elimination of the Tridentine Mass (which, of course, has not been eliminated), they say, and even Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* has been condemned by *Latin Mass*, a magazine that recently seems to have taken on the task of reducing Catholic moral theology to the principles of capitalism. Pope Leo XIII, St. Thomas Aquinas, and every other major doctor of the Church must now make way for Adam Smith and

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In their rage and frustration with the very real disorders in the Church, some traditionalists do not hesitate to say that the See of Peter is vacant. Only their saving remnant of old believers represents the true Church. Like other American conservatives in these troubled times, many Catholic traditionalists are afflicted with a shortsighted perspective on the Church and a crippling ignorance of history. It is not, after all, as if the Catholic Church has not faced equally grave crises in the past, some of which were over theological errors that threatened the very core of the Faith. Anyone who says (as some traditionalists do) that the dangers of the Arian heresy "pale in comparison" to current problems must know very little of Arianism.

Other crises involved scandals that were at least as outrageous as the current one or persecutions that dwarf any of the imagined sufferings of the schismatics in the St. Pius X Society: the ancient bishops who recanted their faith or surrendered their Scriptures and sacred vessels to Roman officials; the persecutions under Decius and Diocletian, followed quickly by the Arian persecutions; the terrible reign of the harlots of the tenth century and the disgusting Renaissance popes (notably Leo X, Julius II, and Alexander VI); the persecution of the Church by French liberals, whose mistreatment caused the death of Pius VI, and by Napoleon, who captured and abused his successor, Pius VII. When Pius IX was elected, liberals around the world called him the "last pope" (a name that had also been applied to Pius VII). The liberals were premature.

Naive and sentimental traditionalists seem to think that, before Paul VI, there were no bad popes. Robin Anderson knows better. A stage manager and writer, Mr. Anderson converted to the Catholic faith and moved to Rome, where he has worked as a speaker for Vatican Radio. He is the author of a number of popular books on Church history, including one (privately circulated, alas) with the provocative title *Crisis Popes*. His new life of Paul VII is a timely reminder of two important facts: Good popes are not perfect, and even the best of popes may have a difficult time steering the Church through an age of crisis. Though not a scholar, Mr. Anderson has covered the major written and documentary sources (most of them in Italian, French, or Latin), and he tells his story with clarity and vigor. He quite properly admires his subject and can be pardoned if he sometimes refuses to be entirely objective.

Barnabas Chiaramonti, the future pope, was born to a distinguished noble family in 1742. As a student, he was exposed to the infectious germ of Jansenism (the Calvinistic and holier-than-thou hypermoralism that seems to beset many American traditionalists), but, in his adult life, he succeeded not only in throwing off whatever Jansenist influence he might have imbibed but even in restoring the Jansenists' mortal enemies, the Jesuits. This was not a trivial accomplishment: Despite the current degeneracy of the Society, the Jesuits were in the forefront of the fight to maintain the traditions of Christian moral theology.

Ordained and entering the Benedictine order as Father Gregory, Chiaramonti (not without distinguished supporters) rapidly rose to prominence, becoming bishop (and cardinal) of Imola in 1785. There, he came face to face with the French Revolution. In 1796, Bonaparte entered Milan and proclaimed his intention of marching on Rome to liberate the people of Italy from papal oppression. Though a treaty was signed, Pope Pius VI was taken prisoner, and the old man was subjected to such mistreatment that he died a prisoner of the French.

In Imola, Cardinal Chiaramonti—as brave as he was prudent—learned quickly that open resistance to Bonaparte could only bring misery and suffering to the people. He had a hard time of it, doing his best to defend the Church and the Christian religion while, at the same time, restraining the hotheads whose intemperate actions brought swift retaliation. Elected Pope in 1800 and taken prisoner in Rome by the French in 1809, he was to apply those hard-won lessons throughout his papacy.

Pius VII was an unflinching opponent of everything the French Revolution stood for, but he was also a Christian who understood that Napoleon was not a demon but a man, perhaps even a great man. Pius's greatest diplomatic triumph was the Concordat of 1801, which restored the Catholic Church in France. Bullied, threatened, and deceived by the French emperor, the Pope consistently sought the best terms he could, both for French Catholics and for the Church as a whole. He faced down Napoleon's violent rages with calm detachment. In 1813, the emperor was determined to force the Pope into signing a second Concordat that would give the emperor effective control of the Church. Arriving at the Pope's chamber in the evening—dressed absurdly in a hunting costume to show how casual he was being about the whole thing—Napoleon stormed and raged at the Pope's refusal. "Times have changed," he shouted, repeating himself, "*times have changed*! The Church must adapt and be reconciled with the Revolution." Pius VII preserved his composure and dryly commented on the imperial performance: "Comedian," he told the emperor to his face.

The Pope's moment of weakness came during this struggle. He eventually was persuaded (under false pretenses) to sign the false Concordat, which he later repudiated. For his heroic resistance to the French tyrant, Pius VII was lauded by the Protestant allies and lionized in England, and yet, when Napoleon fell, he refused to gloat. At the fallen emperor's request, he sent a chaplain to St. Helena, and the Pope, during the period of Napoleon's second and final exile, used to meet with Bonaparte's mother in Rome, where he consoled the poor woman by talking with her of "the good Emperor." Through his confidant and secretary of state, he declared the Church's indebtedness to Napoleon, to whom was owed (after God) the credit for "the reestablishment of religion in the great kingdom of France":

> The dutiful and courageous initiative of 1801 made us long forget and forgive subsequent injuries. Savona and Fontainebleau [where Pius VII had been imprisoned] were but actions of a misled mind, aberrations of human ambition; whilst the Concordat was a saving act undertaken in a Christian and heroic spirit.

The reactionaries of those days, however, were bent on revenge and resisted every attempt to reform the government of the Papal States. If a pope could not give them exactly what they wanted, then so much the worse for him. Throughout the 19th century, such great popes as Pius VII and Pius IX—the men who, after God, saved the Church—were denounced as liberals. It was an age of tribulation for the Church: two popes held captive by the Jacobins and another, Pius IX, attacked and rabbled in Rome and deprived of the Papal States by the

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anti-Catholic liberals who created modern Italy. In hindsight, however, we can see that those were also glorious days for the Church, who took Her stand against the heresies of modernism without taking refuge behind the walls of the Vatican.

A little knowledge of this episode in Church history might take some of the smugness and contempt out of the self-proclaimed saving remnant that is doing so much damage to the traditionalist cause, and Robin Anderson's biography is an excellent place for them to begin their Catholic education.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles *and president of The Rockford Institute.*

Wicked Ways

by J.O. Tate

Inherited Risk: Errol and Sean Flynn in Hollywood and Vietnam
by Jeffrey Meyers
New York: Simon & Schuster;
368 pp., $26.00

◆

Years ago, when Parker Tyler memorably instructed us in the magic and myth of the movies, he indicated something about the archetypal power of film and the status of the stars as our own popular pantheon. The godlike qualities of star power were made manifest when Errol Flynn personified them as the ultimate swashbuckling man in tights, and even more as the object of lurid publicity, lubricious gossip, and sinister speculation. The twilight of the gods that we associate with Gloria Swanson-as-Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) was perhaps even more tragically personified by Flynn when he paid the price for his compulsive dissipation, dying in Vancouver in 1959 of a heart attack at the age of 50. Flynn's disintegration was so complete that his death was a good career move; at the end, he had no place to go, except to a Valhalla of celluloid. Flynn, who had wanted to be buried under an oak tree on his Jamaica estate, wound up instead in the Garden of Everlasting Peace in Forest Lawn, his casket covered in yellow roses, and his eulogy intoned by Jack Warner. The contrast between his humble wish and the cornball reality points up the contradictions that haunted his life.

Errol Flynn excelled at adventure movies of the type that Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. and Jr., had established. We remember him swinging on ropes, dueling with Basil Rathbone or someone, and always winning, and generally hamming it up in *Captain Blood* (1935) and *The Sea Hawk* (1940), two of his best films. *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), a pseudomedieval romance and one of the best movies ever made for the young, is delicious in its precise fantasy and outrageous in its chivalric inversion of the truth of Flynn's character. (Flynn's charm saves this movie from itself.) We also remember him in a lot of bad movies, such as almost all of his Westerns. When he wasn't at sea, this polo player was often on a horse, as in *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1936), or *Santa Fe Trail* (1940), or *They Died With Their Boots On* (1942). Who else but Flynn could have played the Earl of Essex, Don Juan, George Custer, *and* Jeb Stuart?

His stardom notwithstanding, Flynn was largely wasted in films. He hardly ever got to act—hardly ever had a role with an edge or appeared in a great film. He knew that, and he hated himself for it. In the end, however, he got to play "himself"—that is, he was cast as a self-destructive wastrel in *The Sun Also Rises* (1957) and stole the movie from Tyrone Power and Ava Gardner. In *Too Much, Too Soon* (1958), he played his own late friend, John Barrymore, whose follies he imitated in life. And in *The Roots of Heaven* (1958), he was again an aging alcoholic in another memorable performance. Flynn showed that, if he had had the opportunities, he could have done much more as an actor than rehashing the stereotype he was constrained to play on film. The stereotype he made of himself in life is another matter.

The story is fascinating and has been treated many times, most notably by Errol Flynn himself in *My Wicked, Wicked Ways* (dictated to Earl Conrad and published posthumously in 1959), the best autobiography that ever came out of Hollywood. Errol Flynn was a novelist and a journalist, quite well read and insatiably curious. His intelligence and sensitivity come out on film sometimes, and even his swashbuckling had a basis in truth. As an obsessive sailor and yachtsman, he really was, for example, the "Sea Hawk" of the movies; he was also the best tennis player in Hollywood, playing charity exhibition matches with Big Bill Tilden and Don Budge.

Notorious for his womanizing, Flynn was accused of two counts of statutory rape in a sensational trial in 1942. The jury, three-fourths female, acquitted him, but the experience scarred the psyche of Errol Flynn. He never stabilized his relationships with women; Jeffrey Meyers, in his treatment of familiar material, has emphasized that point. Flynn hated his mother and was neglected by his father. He treated all women as if they were as mean and stupid as he thought his mother had been. He only occasionally lived with any one of his three wives and confessed that he could love only men, by which he meant his drinking buddies.

Flynn neglected his children, though he loved them. His eldest, Sean, would try to fill the vacuum by imitating his legendary father. He was in like Flynn with the girls and had roles in *Son of Captain Blood* (1962) and other third-rate movies, but he could not be satisfied with that, any more than his father had been. Always pushing the edge, he met his end in 1970 as a photographer in an obscure incident, which has been much speculated about, in the Vietnam War. Jeffrey Meyers seems to have the last word about the mysterious death of Sean Flynn.

And he probably has the last word about Errol Flynn as well. Rarely (if ever) has a Hollywood star received such incisive treatment as Meyers gives to his primary subject, whom he treats shrewdly and analytically. Meyers has used his powerful research skills, his intellectual acumen, and his literary erudition to punch through the usual Hollywood nonsense, and, about Flynn, there has been an unusual amount of nonsense. Always maintaining perspective, and both sympathizing with and judging his dual subjects, Jeffrey Meyers has achieved a depth of treatment in a glossy, glamorous context. He demonstrates how, for both Flynns, the klieg lights only illuminated the way to a heart of darkness.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

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All the World Against It

by Paul Gottfried

Detoxifying the Culture
by John A. Howard
Baltimore: AmErica House;
188 pp., $19.95

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In this impressive collection of speeches and essays reflecting decades of somber thought, John A. Howard, senior fellow in educational philosophy at the Howard Center, takes stock of changing American manners and values. What makes these comments especially noteworthy is the distance between Howard's accomplishments and the irremediably "toxic" culture that he criticizes.

The scion of a distinguished Midwestern family already known for its entrepreneurial and philanthropic activity in the mid-19th century (Abraham Lincoln worked as an attorney on retainer for Howard's maternal great-grandfather), a Army commander in Europe during World War II, the energetic president of a rising college by the age of 30, and the founder of The Rockford Institute, which publishes *Chronicles*, John Howard has combined personal merit with social distinctions. Moreover, he has spent his fruitful life in the Midwestern ambiance in which his ancestors and those of his wife had lived and around which their descendants are now settled. In short, he is as far removed mentally from the intruding vulgarity he scorns as one can possibly be.

As a cultural historian, I am struck by the incongruity between Howard's world and the one that is now besetting us—even more aware of this stark opposition than I was during my years as John Howard's respectful subordinate at Rockford College in the 1970's. While, in his only novel, George Santayana poked fun at "the last Puritan," he admired the human type whose excesses he exposed and from which he himself was descended on his mother's side. Santayana grasped, as I did while growing up in New England in the 1950's, that morally serious Protestant patricians were essential for the survival of a free but responsible American society. Deprived of them, or of a group like them, in charge, the United States has descended into the moral wasteland Howard laments in his speeches.

Because of this perception I read with special care Howard's "Address to the Monday Club of Rockford," delivered in 1988, about 16 months after I left the city where both of us had lived. His picture of Rockford in the second half of the 19th century and his tender memories of his maternal grandmother, born in 1869, were not entirely new to me. (John had recounted this edifying family history in conversation.) What struck me more than once about the family members evoked, however, was the toughness of the women—their *real* toughness as opposed to the posturing outrage that the American media identify with their "tough women." Instead of the rambling therapeutic phrases of Oprah, we find John Howard's Granny preparing for his mother "passages of inspiration and reassurance" containing the bracing prose of John Bunyan. In contrast to my female students who are endlessly exhorted to "like yourselves," John's mother was taught: "Therefore what God says is best, indeed is best, though all the men in the world are against it." So far from being told to "feel good about yourself" (a message that my colleagues and I are expected to send to every student), the Howard matriarchs were reminded of Marcus Aurelius's precept: "The perfection of moral character consists in passing each day as if it were the last." John Howard's ancestors were not the types my students and colleagues would call "fun people," but somehow they seem more real as human beings than the plastic, politically correct hominoids who have taken their place.

My one criticism of these eloquent, earnest diatribes is that they don't go far enough in showing how dramatically this society has fallen. We are left with the hope that somehow certain civic leaders can turn the situation around, drag children away from TV sewage, and pour wholesome teachings into those poisoned by drugs and parental neglect. In my opinion, such moral uplift is possible only if linked to the kind of people John Howard presents as his ancestors and those who inhabited, in its early years, the northern Illinois community that he portrays.

Some 25 years ago, after listening to an advocate of "enlightened self-interest" prattle on about how greed is beneficial for republican liberty, John turned to me and noted quite properly, "It is character, not greed, that protects us!" To this, all that need be added is that it is entire societies that create the character John Howard believes to be foundational for free government.

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by Samuel Francis

Will Europe Survive?

The recent emergence in Western Europe of increasingly successful political parties based on opposition to Third World immigration and the utter failure of such parties to appear in the United States raise the question posed in the headline of this column. Most Americans of sensible political views have assumed for the last century that Europe was a goner, a political and cultural basket case that had to be pulled out of the straits of history by massive infusions of American treasure and blood in two World Wars and throughout the Cold War. Now, it seems as though it is America that will succumb to mass immigration and the cultural and racial extinction it promises, while, in Europe, there is at least a glimmer of political resistance to that fate.

The most obvious glimmer, of course, is in France, where Jean Marie Le Pen, after three decades of crusading against immigration, placed second in the French presidential primary in April, only to fall victim to a globally orchestrated campaign of vilification and demonization that clearly made it impossible for him to win more than 18 percent of the vote in the general election in May. Nevertheless, the major consequence of the Le Pen balloon was not what happened in France but what occurred in the Netherlands. There, the result of the vilification of Le Pen was the outright murder, one day after the French vote, of Pim Fortuyn, the man who was, more or less, the closest analogue to the French political leader.

The Fortuyn murder (by a left-wing crackpot) tends to make conspiracy theories obsolete. No one need speculate any longer that some secret cabal of the ruling classes orders assassins to eliminate troublesome political figures who just won't shut up or go away. All the ruling classes have to do is launch precisely the kind of vilification against such figures that the entire European and American press vomited at Le Pen (or, earlier, against his counterpart in Austria, Jörg Haider, or, around the same time and to a somewhat lesser degree, against Fortuyn himself). It is now well known to everyone that there are so many nuts allowed to roam at large through European and American society that the proper sort of vilification campaign can be relied upon sooner or later to trigger one of them into eliminating the designated figure. Some friends of Pat Buchanan wondered in 1999, when he was being vilified in the American press in much the same way, if that was the real purpose; whether it consciously was or not, it remains a small miracle that Mr. Buchanan—or, indeed, M. Le Pen or Mr. Haider or any such leader in Europe or America—remains alive today.

Of course, Mr. Fortuyn, an open homosexual of Marxist background, was not really similar to M. Le Pen except in his opposition to immigration. Mr. Fortuyn was notable for having once wisecracked, when subjected to the ritual accusation of "racism," "Don't call me a racist. I know more about Moroccan boys than anyone at this table." Mr. Fortuyn's case against immigration was that Islam is, as he called it, a "backward religion" that had missed the Enlightenment and was utterly incompatible with the tolerance of homosexuality and liberated womanhood that now pertains in all Western countries. He was obviously entirely correct about this, though whether his is the most compelling reason to oppose massive Islamic immigration into Europe is another question. It certainly has never been M. Le Pen's main objection.

A traditional and devout Roman Catholic as well as a French nationalist, M. Le Pen is probably as close to being a Gallic Pat Buchanan as any European can be. What is distinctive about him is that he is not in the monarchist-proto-fascist tradition of Charles Maurras, nor (as columnist Jonah Goldberg stupidly wrote) "nostalgic for the Vichy government," nor even that he has nursed resentments about the loss of Algeria for the past 40 years. M. Le Pen preaches no doctrine, threatens to overthrow no governments, and denounces no demons, despite the false smears that he is an "antisemite." *Washington Times* editor Wesley Pruden wrote what is perhaps the dumbest line ever penned about M. Le Pen (and there have been entire libraries of dumb lines written about him) when he remarked on April 23 that

> All that the first round of voting actually demonstrated was that 17 percent of the voting population stand with a man of anti-Semitic beliefs. This is even reassuring if we can take the Le Pen vote as credible evidence that only 17 percent of Frenchmen hate Jews. Most of us thought it was a lot more than that. Burning synagogues has become the latest fad in the nation that regards itself as the arbiter of fashion.

Of course, the dozen or so recent synagogue burnings in France have nothing to do with M. Le Pen or his supporters, and, indeed, the French nationalist is well known (and virtually unique on the European right) for being pro-Israeli. The attacks on Jewish targets in France have been the work of the very Muslim immigrants against whom M. Le Pen has warned these many years, even as dullards like Mr. Pruden have chortled about how mass immigration means cheap nannies and exotic restaurants.

The larger point is that, while leaders like M. Le Pen oppose immigration because they want to preserve the France of Joan of Arc, leaders like Mr. Fortuyn oppose it because they seek to preserve the Europe of Elton John. Although it's by no means clear that the latter is worth preserving, it may be that those Europeans who want to preserve it will prove to be more numerous and more decisive in European politics than those who, like M. Le Pen, harbor far more conventional conservative and right-wing goals. The reason is that the political culture of the right-left polarity, and especially the side that M. Le Pen represents, seems to be pretty much defunct, while the neither-

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right-nor-left nationalism of Mr. Fortuyn (rather similar to that of Jörg Haider and several other anti-immigration nationalists across Europe) seems to be rising.

Asked in an interview with *Newsweek* just before his death, "You dislike the term 'right-wing' to describe your program. Why?" Mr. Fortuyn replied, "There is no longer a distinction between progressives and conservatives. People are thinking in a non-ideological way. . . . In my program there are elements of left and right." Indeed, despite M. Le Pen's conservatism and allegiance to the political right, his own success has, in large part, been the result of his ability to combine elements of the left (mainly a commitment to working-class welfare and economic-security policies) with his nationalist appeal and thereby wipe the socialist Maurice Jospin off the political map. In Calais, the largest French city under Communist control, where a Party member has held the mayoralty since 1973, Le Pen came in first in the presidential primary, and the Communist candidate, fifth, "with much of his lost vote apparently going to Le Pen," as the *Washington Post* reported.

What enables such parties—not only in France, the Netherlands, and Austria but in Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland, and perhaps in Great Britain, where the British National Party won its first local government seats this spring—to win working-class votes is not that they can outbid more conventional parties of the left in pandering to demands for more welfare, health care, etc., but that all the usual Republican Party blather about "free enterprise" and the "free market" is simply absent from their rhetoric, and they don't need to run from it when appealing to working-class voters. That allows them to dwell on the issue that really drives their success: immigration and the crime, threats to jobs, educational problems, and general cultural inundation it causes. It is precisely because both the Republicans in this country and most of the "alternative parties" of the right that occasionally (or, should I say, perennially) challenge it cannot seem to emancipate themselves from such rhetoric that they never go anywhere.

The inevitable result of the rhetoric of Economic Man is to convince working-class voters that the candidate is merely a shill for business interests and that whatever noises he makes about protecting the average man and woman are designed merely to snare their votes. When such conventional Republicans as Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and the Bush clan imitate populist noises for that very purpose, the result is to confirm what the voters already suspected, and the ultimate consequence is that what could and should have been an almost irresistible and invincible means of mobilizing a mass following for a serious right-wing political force has been ruined through its cynical exploitation by cheap politicos.

The apparently indissoluble union between the forces of the American political right and a rhetoric of Economic Man that never appealed to anyone but businessmen and their well-paid journalistic parrots and today only frightens and alarms just about everyone else is one reason a nationalist right cannot emerge in the United States. A second lies in our political system and its lack of the proportional representation that most European democracies enjoy. The substantial fragments of the electorate that parties of the "right" (if that's the proper term for them) in Europe have been able to win allow the parties' leaders to gain public office, remain in the public eye, and build on their accomplishments. Our system, allowing only a winner-take-all result, forbids that.

But the third and perhaps the most important reason the American right has failed to form an alternative to the deadheads of the GOP is that many on the American right are deadheads themselves who really don't want anything more than to keep out of office the political figures whom they have been persuaded to hate the most. Almost everyone who worked in any of the Buchanan campaigns has told me repeatedly that what he heard incessantly from conservatives who refused to support Mr. Buchanan during all of his campaigns was that "we just can't afford to let the Democrats win." Having petrified itself by concocting the most labyrinthine, terrifying, and implausible conspiracy theories about Mr. Clinton, his wife, and the drug-smuggling, murdering, sex-crazed camorra he brought to Washington, the mainstream right failed to define any serious political issues with which it could attack its foe. Immigration, free trade, global crusading, pandering to racial minorities—every measure or policy that Mr. Clinton supported, the right has adopted. Its only objection to him was that he was a crook and a sex fiend, and if the Democrats were successful at proving nothing else, they easily showed that Republicans were not much better on either count.

The brute truth is that most of the good folk who compose the American right (certainly its leadership) simply have no understanding of how to create, organize, publicize, and maintain an effective political party that is neither a pale shadow of the Grand Ole Pirates they have just abandoned nor a political version of the church of their choice, where they can listen forever to their favorite sermons and rehearse eternally their banal hymns to bourgeois virtues and the dogma of Economic Man. If the American right wants or would even be attracted to any political vehicle that offered more than that, there is simply no evidence for it in its entire history since the New Deal era.

Eventually, there may appear on the American political scene a party able to do something like what M. Le Pen, Mr. Fortuyn, and Mr. Haider, to name only the best-known figures, have done or are trying to do. Eventually, those parties in Europe or parties descended from them may accomplish what they are seeking—an end to the mass immigration that now clearly threatens to overwhelm the populations and civilizations of the continent. If they or we can ever accomplish that goal, there will be plenty of time—and plenty of disposition—to splinter and recombine in new political configurations that can fight, bicker with, and even shoot each other to their or our hearts' content. If neither they nor we do accomplish it, then there won't be time—or purpose—for much of anything, and whatever political quibbles arise will be among a new people entirely alien to those few wretched Europeans who descend from us and have managed to survive what mass immigration creates in place of what Europe's new nationalism is trying to conserve. c

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by Scott P. Richert

Ethnic Cleansing

Family traditions often get started by accident—especially, perhaps, those that center on food. On the second New Year's Eve after we were married, my wife and I found ourselves trapped in our apartment in Vienna, Virginia, victims of a freak snow and ice storm that made the Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., streets downright dangerous, especially since no one in the area knew how to drive in such conditions. While we both had weathered far worse growing up in Michigan, we decided not to risk our lives but someone else's, and so we ordered Chinese delivery. (To salve our consciences, we tipped very well.) At the end of the meal, one of us conceived the sappy idea of breaking our fortune cookies open at midnight, and by 12:01 A.M. (disappointing fortunes notwithstanding), it was probably inevitable that we would do it all again the next year.

And so, when we arrived in Rockford two years later, on December 27, 1995, one of my first tasks was to locate a Chinese restaurant. In a dingy strip mall on North Main Street, around the corner from our apartment, I found a little hole in the wall with six or seven tables. *I guess it will do*, I thought. *By next year, we'll have located the best Chinese restaurant in town.* Little did I know that we already had.

The food we ate that New Year's Eve—crab rangoon, fried rice, and black bean and garlic chicken with green peppers and onions—was not the best Chinese I have ever had, but few restaurants I have dined at have ever topped it (most notably, a Chinese restaurant on Long Island whose name I can't recall, where I first enjoyed General Tso's chicken—delightfully crunchy-chewy, with fiery little peppers and the lightest of sauces—and my personal favorite, the Sichuan Pavilion, on K Street in Washington, D.C.). Over the next five or so years, I enjoyed innumerable lunches and dinners with family and colleagues at the place we all came to know simply as "Mrs. Lee's"—Lee's Chinese Restaurant, immortalized in the small ads that we placed in *Chronicles* as a token of our gratitude for the many kindnesses that Mrs. Lee and her husband, Al, bestowed upon us.

A decade earlier, Tom Fleming had also eaten one of his first meals in Rockford at Mrs. Lee's, when *Chronicles*' founding editor Leopold Tyrmand took him there to sample the wonton soup—the best in Rockford, Tyrmand claimed. And it was, though I always preferred the hot and sour. (If you're ever in D.C., try the best of both worlds: Sichuan Pavilion's hot and sour wonton soup, a sublime—and spicy—dish I have never seen anywhere else.) My children always said that no one could make white rice quite like Mrs. Lee—whose real name was Ann Wang and whose unrelenting cheerfulness and good nature are reflected in the fact that it took her almost five years to correct us.

In mid-size Midwestern towns such as Rockford, small ethnic restaurants come and go, which made Mrs. Lee's 20-some-year run little short of a miracle. While such places might survive for generations in New York City or San Francisco, the normal pattern here is for small restaurants (often run by first- or second-generation immigrants) to blaze the way, introducing adventurous Midwesterners to an interesting new cuisine, which is then picked up by a larger restaurant (often a chain), which ditches all of the sparkle and originality of the cuisine in order to make it more palatable to a broader range of American diners. And, of course, it never hurts to make up for the loss of quality by increasing the quantity, preferably by putting the food on an all-you-can-eat buffet. (Rockford now has a Chinese-Japanese-American buffet featuring sushi—a risky proposition if ever there was one. Nine eighty-nine, no doggie bags—something for which Rover can be thankful.)

This dynamic is more proof that, to the extent that any assimilation has actually occurred in the "Great Melting Pot," it has largely been destructive, stripping immigrants and their food of their distinctiveness and reducing them to the lowest common denominator. If there were still a true American cuisine, it could adopt the best foods and techniques and spices from other cultures and make them its own, the way that, say, Poles, Lebanese, and Vietnamese did with French cuisine. Instead, American chain restaurants and agribusiness conglomerates take other cultures' food and try to make it taste like a TV dinner. And, unfortunately, they usually succeed.

Mrs. Lee's has been gone for almost two years now, and with it not only the crab rangoon, wonton soup, and beef kow but Mrs. Lee's insights into the local public schools and the mayor and her tips about Brazilian telephone stocks. Ann and Al were not forced out of business by their competition but chose to retire rather than battle their landlord, who wanted them to make thousands of dollars worth of improvements to their space before he would offer them another lease. The forces of homogenization, however, were closing in—a local Chinese restaurant chain, predictably named "Happy Wok," had opened on the corner, and a Chinese buffet, predictably named "China Buffet" and featuring such traditional Asian dishes as frozen pizza and boxed mashed potatoes with canned gravy, had taken up residence in the next mall to the north. Still, I'd like to think that Mrs. Lee could have withstood the competition, perhaps less because of the quality of her food than the loyalty of her patrons and her loyalty to them—though, in the end, "the quality of her food" and "her loyalty to her patrons" may simply be different ways of saying the same thing. -c

R.I.P.

When in Rockford,

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Letter From the Upper Midwest

by Sean Scallon

Micro-Farming

◆

Last year, I wrote in favor of establishing a Midwestern dairy cartel ("One Man's Idea is Another's . . . ," *Vital Signs*, August 2001). As a call for controlling one's regional, economic, and cultural destiny, it was well received. As a matter of economics, however, it was not a very practical idea. A man can dream of establishing an OPEC in the heartland, but there are certain dreams that are better left unfulfilled.

In reality, bigness and corporatization—if not downright Stalinist collectivism—are already happening in the Midwest farm culture, particularly in dairying. Everything that is anti-free market takes place when a small farm goes under or gets swallowed up by a giant agribusiness, cartels notwithstanding. At least my OPEC was made up of hard-working small businessmen and their families—hardly lazy sheiks or corrupt generals and politicians living off their oil wealth.

If the answer is not a cartel or some regional price compact, however, then what can turn the tide in favor of family farms and the structures they support, economically and culturally? And not just for dairy but for all of agriculture and agrarian life as well?

Larry Swain doesn't seem like a rebel. There's no James Dean cool or Marlon Brando sneer in him, just the look of a rumpled, portly college professor. But in the ag world, Swain is definitely a rebel—and, potentially, one who represents a danger to the pervading "Get big, or get out" mindset. This agriculture professor at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls is thinking big by thinking small.

"To many Americans, cheap food has become our birthright as much as cheap oil is," Swain said as I interviewed him while we traveled in his van on I-94 through the Twin Cities. "That's the way American agriculture is geared and that's where world agriculture is headed—towards big farms, mass production and mass marketing, to which the products are sold to big grocery store and restaurant chains. It's like a shark that has to keep swimming in order to stay alive. Well, agriculture and food production on this scale have to keep getting bigger in order to survive."

Swain, who grew up on a South Dakota farm, believes the whole rotten structure is not only killing itself by getting too big, it's killing real people in the process.

"There was a farmer near Wausau who recently died of a heart attack. He owned a large dairy farm, and he won awards, too, for being a model farmer. Now, he drops dead just like that, only in his mid-50's. How does that happen? Lots of farmers have been sold on the idea that, if they just expand their operations, they can put their worries on the shelf. They can just hire out for labor, have everything run by computer, be more efficient, cost effective, no sweat at all. Instead of being stuck on their farms all the time, they can take vacations once in a while. Then they find out, [with] a farm that size, you have to worry [about] zoning ordinances from the county and the townships, manure storage and all the environmental regulations that come from it, supply issues, equipment maintenance, animal health, some of the same problems smaller units deal with, only on an even larger scale. The stress doesn't go away; it just gets worse."

From this anecdote, Swain launches an attack on those he thinks responsible for corrupting, if not killing, what he once held sacred: the federal government, for policies that encourage expansion; the banks, which provide the money for it; the land-grant universities and their extension agents, which provide the rationale; and chain stores and fast-food joints, which provide the skewed market. He saves his heaviest artillery for the farmers' cooperatives that, instead of protecting their clients, join in on the fun. His screed against the co-ops comes as we pass the headquarters of Land O' Lakes, a big Upper Midwestern co-op located in one of the glass towers that makes up St. Paul's skyline.

"We've got to get the big cooperatives back in the hands of ordinary farmers," Swain muses as we turn south, away from the urban core. "The suits have taken over in the boardroom. They only know one business model: Get big, or get out."

Whether it's "Get big, or get out" or "Fence row to fence row," as former agriculture secretary Earl Butz used to say while he and Richard Nixon gave away our grain to the communists, such phrases have all too often summarized how American agriculture (and, really, the whole economy) has operated in the last 30 years. Swain wants to fight back, and he has a plan to do it—a free-market plan that, unlike my own fantasy, has a shot at succeeding.

We are back in the countryside west of I-35, near the town of New Prague, in Scott County, Minnesota. Here, on the small farm owned by the Minar family, is Swain's counterattack: a farm, dairy, and processing plant all in one. The Minars are marketing, selling, and distributing all by themselves. No middlemen allowed. Over a bountiful farmers' supper, Dave and Florence Minar, with children Mike, Dan, and Laura, plus spouses and neighbors and friends, brainstormed this idea of producing and selling their own dairy products in order to keep their 150-cow operation from becoming just another failed farm. They are now Cedar Summit Farms, Inc.

The Minars turned to Swain, who is retiring from teaching to work full-time at his own consulting company, which draws up business plans for small farms. He helped the family get loans to invest in state-of-the-art processing and packaging equipment built by Israeli companies for *kibbutzes*, plus computers and software that will help Cedar Summit directly market its soft dairy products of milk, ice cream, and yogurt.

"Right now, conditions are ripe for these kinds of operations to succeed and establish a market share," Swain said. "The technology is now available for small farms to be able to process and package and distribute products directly from the farm. There is a growing consumer demand for food that is seen as both safe and familiar, particularly after the anthrax scare last fall and all the disease scares in Europe. The cost is less, and the profits, greater in these kinds of operations. Big farms, by contrast, have to keep expanding their operations just to

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keep up with the costs. It's a vicious cycle."

Cedar Summit and other such farms are not utopias. Local banks, owned by faraway chains, are reluctant to give loans to small producers. The Minars needed plenty of equity in their farm to get the start-up money, and they are mortgaged heavily in equipment. Plus, they have had to deal with the local county and township boards, which are having a hard time trying to figure out how to classify such a business: It is commercial, agricultural, or retail? Because Scott County is considered part of the Twin Cities metropolitan area even though it still mostly countryside, they have more bureaucratic headaches in dealing with the metropolitan council.

In a way, this is a blessing in disguise. Scott County and New Prague are considered exurban territory, somewhere between country and suburb. You can find clusters of subdivisions outside New Prague and near I-35 and other four-lane highways that take commuters to their jobs in the Twin Cities. The presence of commuters means that the Minars have another local market besides the grocery stores and regular farmers' markets for direct sale of their products.

What the Minars like most about their farm is what it means to and for their family. There are plenty of "chores" to be done. Besides working in the barn, Minar family members act as accountants, salesmen, marketers, computer programmers, technicians, and chefs. These jobs lured Mike and Dan home from the Twin Cities. The operation also involves the spouses of both Laura and Mike, along with extended family and neighbors.

"We have top-notch milk here, and we knew we could make good dairy products," Laura said. "But it's our family that's the middleman now. It's the perfect opportunity for all of us to work together again. It's so nice to have the family business back."

The spin-off jobs from the farm are what has Swain most excited about this project and others he hopes to start. "With all these jobs available, people from rural areas don't have to leave for the big city to find work, to find the kinds of high-paying jobs they want. They can still live right here and not have to commute. I think this is the way we can revive our rural communities as a whole; otherwise, they are going to die out."

He dreams of putting 40 such operations in the Mann Valley in Pierce County where I live; a buffer, like Cedar Summit Farms, against the urban sprawl of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Saving these farms will preserve much of the scenery of south-central Minnesota.

I wasn't the only one who was at Cedar Summit Farms to observe this new model for agriculture. Farmers from Wisconsin and Nebraska were taking a look, seeing how the principles of the Minars' operation could work for them—and not just at dairies, either. Couldn't an Iowa hog farmer market his own pork products through a micro-slaughterhouse? An Illinois corn farmer, his own corn syrup, cereal, or ethanol through his own microprocessing plant? Or a Kansas wheat farmer, his own bread through a micromill? The possibilities are endless.

The day of our visit, radio station KCZH, the "Voice of Czech County," was broadcasting live from Cedar Summit Farm with the help of the New Prague Chamber of Commerce, which is eager to drum up business for the area. A guest performer squeezed out Czech folk songs on a concertina. The ties that bind the Old World to the New in this area, which was so heavily settled by Czech and Slovak immigrants, run right through this micro-dairy, and not just in the wonderful Bohemian cream (milk mixed with brandy) that Cedar Summit produces. It was in Slovakia itself, several years ago, that Swain got the idea to establish micro-dairies. Touring the countryside, Swain happened upon a small village that took pride in a micro-dairy operation the local farmers had set up. Sadly, that dairy has now closed, but Swain carried the seed across the ocean in the hope that the cousins of these Slovaks in New Prague—and their neighbors across the Upper Midwest—could plant it themselves.

The day at Cedar Summit was a festive one; happiness beamed from the faces of the Minar family, Swain, and the other farmers in attendance. For the first time in a long time, they were excited about farming again, proud to be who they are. If farmers can be accused of feeling that the world is against them, often that's because it really is. The problems this attitude can lead to—anger, depression, resentment, suicide, and despair—are well documented in the Upper Midwest and in rural communities across America. Yet micro-dairies and micro-farms in general are fighting back. They offer a solution that's found in the farmers' own hands, rather than those of people far away in Washington, the state capital, some bureaucrat's office, or a corporate boardroom. You don't need government socialism in order to fight corporate socialism; you just need a plan and the will to declare independence.

Sean Scallon is a reporter from East Ellsworth, Wisconsin.

Letter From London

by Derek Turner

On Being a Pariah

◆

In summer and autumn 2001, as Iain Duncan Smith, Michael Portillo, Kenneth Clarke, Michael Ancram, and David Davis slugged it out to see who would become the new leader of Britain's Conservative Party, colorful stories began circulating about Duncan Smith, who was widely regarded as the right's great white hope.

An ex-Army officer and the son of a World War II fighter pilot, Duncan Smith entered Parliament in 1992, in Norman Tebbit's old seat for Chingford (on the Essex edge of London). As Tebbit joked when he introduced his successor at a meeting, "If you think I'm right wing, you should meet this guy!" Soon, Duncan Smith became part of the internal opposition to the Maastricht Treaty—a brave move for a new MP. He spoke at a Monday Club meeting in 1996 and asked questions in Parliament about immigration and housing (which was received well locally, as many Chingfordians are part of the white flight from London's East End). He later became Tory spokesman on defense under William Hague and went along cheerfully with Hague's sensible policies on asylum, the *Macpherson Report*, and homosexuality. He seemed a dependable, if somewhat dull, standard-bearer for the right.

With such a *curriculum vitae*, he was never going to get good press (and never will—something he has yet to learn). But the media campaign against him was more savage than usual, reflecting how the ideological center of gravity has shifted—or become more obvious—under

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the Blair governments. Even before his candidacy was formally announced, dark tales emerged that his supporters were all very "extreme." The *Guardian* even suggested that some around Duncan Smith wanted a military coup. Meanwhile, MPs who supported Duncan Smith were described as "swivel-eyed extremists," "lunatics," and "nutters" by journalists and Labour politicians—in some cases merely for meeting occasionally with Italian Alleanza Nazionale MEPs.

Leftists always find the right curiously fascinating, and the further right the man in question, the sweeter the forbidden fruit—so they have a vested emotional interest in believing the worst of their enemies. And, of course, they love a good conspiracy, as do all journalists.

So Ken Clarke, Duncan Smith's final rival, was not the only person delighted to discover that an elderly man, active in the Conservative Party for 53 years and whose name had appeared on a list of Welsh Conservatives who were backing Duncan Smith, was the father of the leader of the British National Party (BNP). Edgar Griffin had also been unwise enough to answer the BNP hotline in his son's absence when a tabloid called. That was enough to have him suspended from the list of Duncan Smith's supporters immediately and, two days later, expelled from the party.

The media moved into top "shock horror" gear. A spate of stories appeared about alleged BNP infiltration of the Conservatives—superficially believable at a time when many Conservative associations are imploding (the average age of the party's members is now 65). So exciting was this concept that some journalists got carried away. In at least one case, the *Times* had to print a fulsome apology, cover legal costs, and pay substantial damages to a man it had accused of BNP entryism.

The main target of the attacks was the Conservative Monday Club, a pressure group on the right of the party. Predictably, Duncan Smith, although he had said as recently as September that the club was "what the Party was all about," immediately distanced himself from the club. The uproar concerned the club's expressed support for voluntary repatriation of immigrants. Ironically, voluntary repatriation is on the statute books, even under Blair—and why something *voluntary* could be so objectionable was never explained.

In recent years, the club has tried hard to ingratiate itself with the Central Office, but to no avail. In a meeting that was more of a *fait accompli* than a discussion, the party chairman, David Davis, MP, (himself rumored to have "far right" tendencies) told club officers that they would no longer be able to espouse *any* policies on immigration if they wished to remain a Conservative group. The three MPs connected to the club were ordered to suspend their membership. On January 9, club members were asked to support a rule change that would say that the club was "committed to opposing the propagation of any kind of racial hatred" and welcomed any Conservative as a member "irrespective of their [*sic*] racial origin or religion."

In themselves, of course, these aims are unobjectionable and, consequently, were endorsed by club members in the ensuing postal ballot. The new rules, however, will be interpreted as meaning that there should never again be any discussion of racial topics. In any case, these aspirations had already been realized within the club, which has had plenty of black and Jewish members over its 42-year history and has coordinated meetings with Muslim groups (on monetary reform, an eccentric hobby-horse for some club officers).

In the middle of the uproar, Duncan Smith's advisors cannily released the biographical information that Duncan Smith's grandfather had married a Japanese woman. The clear implication was that IDS (as he had, by now, been rebranded, so that he would seem hip) could not therefore be a "racist"; he could feel ethnic minority pain. The great white hope was becoming a one-eighth Japanese hope. This impression was strengthened when Duncan Smith began signalling that he might end Tory support for Section 28—the legislation that prevents public money from being used to promote homosexuality in schools—and said that he "would have no truck with racists" (which, in today's parlance, means no truck with patriotism or traditionalism). He also suspended the activities of Conservatives Against a Federal Europe, of which he had long been a prominent supporter, on the grounds that there was no longer any need for it, as so many of its supporters were now in the Shadow Cabinet. Yet cynics suspect that this is just another way of ditching a controversial group that has been accused of seeking withdrawal from the European Union, which is also regarded as an "extreme" policy. (I have been at several CAFÉ meetings and can confirm that this certainly seemed to be the chief aspiration of many CAFÉ members—even some of the peers and MPs.)

With such close attention being paid to the Monday Club, it was inevitable that my magazine, *Right Now!*, would also fall within the sights of the modern Puritans. Some of our supporters and patrons are also supporters and patrons of the Monday Club, and there are many similarities between the two groups, except that RN has never been a Conservative publication.

Right Now! is a stock villain in the pantomimic far-left *weltanschauung*, and Labour ministers have attacked the magazine in the past. The Puritan attack, however, was a media blitz unprecedented in the magazine's history. Stories (derived largely from a communist magazine) appeared in the Labour-supporting *Guardian* and *Independent*. Doubly and triply derivative pieces appeared in the *Times* and regional and foreign newspapers, and I had a cameo appearance on BBC Radio 4.

The articles all sounded rather similar, probably because almost none of the journalists concerned had bothered to contact me when writing their stories. Of course, it is often a waste of time talking to journalists anyway. Even when they do make contact, they rarely add any new information to their pieces. For instance—to add a Pooterish note—the *Independent* dutifully reported that I was a supporter of Clarke rather than Duncan Smith, as I had told the reporter, but added that "this was widely interpreted as a tactical move." In other words, I was lying. (I wasn't: By then, I had seen enough of Duncan Smith's cowardice under fire.)

Journalists are, of course, notoriously lazy, and, in a histrionic era, the most colorful angle is generally their first choice. Most of the articles alleged that the magazine was hugely influential, said that our website was "linked" (a word beloved of leftists and journalists alike) to "extremists," quoted from two articles (one about eugenics and one about immigration), and made great play of the fact that I had once described myself as a "neighbourhood nazi."

My attempts to remonstrate retroactively were mostly fruitless. Hardly any of my letters to the editor were published, and, when they were, they were abridged

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greatly. The journalists simply did not want to know about mitigating factors that did not fit in with their dualistic worldview. Our website is linked to all kinds of groups (including *www.ChroniclesMagazine.org*). The article about eugenics was very similar to one that had appeared in the *Spectator* a few months before (about which nobody had complained), and it was followed in the next *Right Now!* by an article *attacking* eugenics. The article on immigration had been written by Ezra Mishan, a respected environmentalist and economist. If a further Pooterish note can be excused, I was joking in 1987 when I described myself so colorfully.

This kind of sly censorship can be rather frustrating. Yet it is also darkly amusing to watch rank hypocrisy in action—journalists usually pride themselves on being liberal and open-minded. Moreover, it is curiously flattering to be outlawed from a society so unappealing and essentially nonviable. *Right Now!* has obviously rattled the moral guardians considerably. More to the point, the publicity resulted in a torrent of inquiries from members of the public who had not previously heard of the magazine and wanted to get sample copies or to subscribe. Nor has the publicity deterred those sympathetic people in public life with whom we are in contact; those who would be frightened by such phantoms would not be worth knowing anyway. A letter I sent to all Tory MPs elicited many interesting responses, signaling that there is widespread disgruntlement with Duncan Smith even at this most quiescent of levels and that he is far from secure.

Of course, difficult choices between inclination and expediency will always have to be made in politics. Duncan Smith may never have thought about the nature of the left or the long-term consequences of his recent actions. (Tory politicians are not noted for their interest in cultural politics.) I can also see why Duncan Smith might wish to shrug off his past and forget inconvenient friends. It is never pleasant to be attacked for what others have said, or to have your character aspersed and your motives given the worst possible construction, or for it to be said or hinted that you are a moral inferior. It is only human to want a quiet life. Yet such disapprobation will have to be risked by a Conservative leader at some stage if any real defense is to be made against the forces of anti-Westernism. Going on present form, it does not look like Duncan Smith is cut out for the job.

Derek Turner is the editor of Right Now!, *published in London.*

Letter From Texas

by Wayne Allensworth

Remembering *Tender Mercies*

◆

In the years just before America's entry into World War II, thousands of people, shaken and scattered by the Great Depression, made their way to Houston, where the shipyards were booming.

My people wound up there, too. The place they lived was called West End, rows of little white houses set up on cinder blocks, neighborhood groceries, such as Chick Schreiber's near my grandparents' house off Washington Avenue, and buses that could take you downtown to see the picture show or to the Sam Houston Coliseum for the annual Fat Stock Show and Rodeo. Daddy and Uncle Harold saw Gene Autry there twice.

Grandma and Poppa, my great-grandparents, lived there. I spent a lot of time in that house on Malone Street with my grandmother and Momma, who helped to take care of Poppa when he had cancer. There were deer antlers in the house and a picture of Jesus on the wall. (Grandma was very pious and made her free-spirited husband keep his beer outside in an icebox.) I think there was a big chinaberry tree just off the front porch.

Momma was among Poppa's favorite grandchildren. I can't remember how many he had, and, with nine kids of his own and their offspring, I was often confused about just what kin all of them were to me. It didn't seem to matter. We were close in those days.

Cancer was a mystery to me. I hated to see Poppa like that. But he always kept his humor and ornery ways, even then. I like to remember him as the lovable old cuss from the Rio Grande Valley who used to supervise the gutting and skinning of deer in Uncle Kenneth's yard.

When Poppa died, it hit us all hard. Grandma followed a few years later, and that was even worse, for I had figured out by then that all of us were going to die. Even Grandma and Poppa. Even me.

Death was hard enough to figure, but to watch them suffer was more than I could bear. I remember crying when Grandma couldn't recognize me anymore and wondering why God had allowed this to happen to that saintly woman.

I began wondering all over again when Momma told me she had cancer. We put her on prayer lists and asked friends to pray for her. I also wondered how she could do this to *me*. (Even our best wishes are tainted by Original Sin.)

Cancer and the Will of God remain mysteries to me: Momma called one day and asked me if I believed in miracles and I said, *Yes, I reckoned I did*. And she told me the cancer was gone. No treatment. No reason. Just gone.

I hadn't finished rejoicing when a friend of ours called a little later. I told her about Momma, and she was happy for us. Then she reminded me of her uncle, who had been dying for years. She was wondering what to pray for. Just pray for what's best for him, I said, leaving it to God to do the rest. And be thankful for what you have—and what you had but had almost forgotten. That was the best I could do for her.

In Horton Foote's *Tender Mercies*, Mac Sledge, a recovered alcoholic and onetime country-music star, has a moment like that, wondering why some things happen and others don't—why some people live and others don't. And he couldn't answer his own question. This beautiful little film, shot near Waxahachie, Texas, leaves off with Mac playing ball with his stepson, laughing and enjoying the tender mercies God has granted, and not asking questions he can't answer anymore.

So I thank God for the tender mercies he has shown us: for Grandma and Poppa, for Momma, for Washington Avenue and Malone Street, and for the memories, fading now, but still there.

Wayne Allensworth tries to remember Malone Street the way it was and always recommends Tender Mercies *to friends.*

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Bush's Middle East Policy: Mendacity, Folly, or Both?

On June 24, President George W. Bush delivered his long-awaited speech on the Middle East. Most of his 15-minute statement was devoted to harsh criticism of the Palestinians, including the assertion that "peace requires a new and different Palestinian leadership . . . not compromised by terrorism." In addition to ditching Yasser Arafat and ending the system in which "power is concentrated in the hands of an unaccountable few," the President told the Palestinians that they had to eradicate corruption, reform security services, create an independent judiciary, empower the legislature, and "build a practicing democracy based on tolerance and liberty." Mr. Bush declared that Palestinian democratic transformation must consist of more than "cosmetic changes or a veiled attempt to preserve the *status quo*." If fully and willingly applied, he said, those changes would form the basis of a peace process that might lead to a "provisional" Palestinian state.

Mr. Bush talked briefly but approvingly of Israel's right to defend herself, indirectly condoning Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's attempt to deal with the Palestinians through military means. He equated Palestinian suicide attacks with the global "terror" against which America is at war. He made no demand for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, which has long been regarded as a prerequisite to any serious peacemaking effort, but said that the Israeli army should withdraw to positions it held on the West Bank before the latest round of troubles began on September 28, 2000. He stated that Israel should refrain from building further Jewish settlements in the West Bank, but he did not specify whether the practice of expanding existing settlements must end. At some point in the future, according to Mr. Bush, Israel should agree to pull back to the lines it held before the 1967 Six-Day War, but this has to be preceded by negotiations based on U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 that call for "secure and recognized" borders—the term Ariel Sharon has used to defend retaining large swathes of occupied land.

The reaction to the address around the world was aptly summarized by the *Times* of London on June 26: "President Bush's speech on the Middle East was so pro-Israel that it might have been written by Ariel Sharon." The *Independent*'s columnist wondered,

> why doesn't Mr. Bush let Ariel Sharon run the White House press bureau? Not only would it be more honest—we would at least be hearing the voice of Israel at first hand—but it would spare the American President the ignominy of parroting everything he is told by the Israelis.

The BBC's Jeremy Cooke opined that, for Sharon, "Mr. Bush's speech was a political victory on a scale he could not have imagined." A few Arab commentators tried to put on a brave face, saying that some prospect of Palestinian statehood is better than none. The Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronoth* was closer to the mark when it declared that "Sharon can demand copyright on the speech." Ruby Rivlin, the Israeli government's communication minister and a member of Sharon's Likud Party, was equally blunt: "It looks like it was written by a senior Likud official. We are talking about a pro-Israeli speech and a victory for the course taken by Prime Minister Sharon."

The leaders of America's allies in the industrialized world privately agree and have refrained from offering more than a polite nod to Mr. Bush's Middle East initiative at the Group of Eight summit in Canada. All of them would like to see Washington put more pressure on Israel, but in the wake of Bush's failed European tour and a looming trade war, they want to avoid the appearance of another transatlantic rift.

It is noteworthy—and puzzling—that the President avoided dwelling on all four core problems of the dispute: the final borders of Israel and her future Palestinian neighbor; the standing and future of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories; the status of Jerusalem and its holy sites; and the right of return of Palestinian refugees.

Mr. Bush ended his address on an incongruously haughty note, quoting from the Old Testament: "I have set before you life and death, therefore choose life." Pretentiousness is fine when you have some words and deeds—preferably miracles—to back it up, but at the end of *this* speech, the quote sounded like a taunt to the Palestinians.

In the aftermath of the President's address, all-too-many young Palestinians may choose a loud, TNT-wired death; within their Islamic belief system, the choice may seem reasonable. In the short term, the main effect of President Bush's position on the ground will be to encourage Sharon to escalate his military response and to ignore calls to resume dialogue. Israeli tanks plowing in and out of Ramallah, Jenin, or Hebron, and a few Palestinian deaths today and more Israeli victims of suicide bombers tomorrow, will cease to be front-page news.

Mr. Bush's speech was problematic for at least five reasons. The first and most obvious is that Mr. Bush's conditions for reform of the Palestinian Authority cannot be met. Deliberately or not, he has set the bar so high that neither Arafat nor any likely or imaginable successor can leap it, now or in the foreseeable future. No Arab state is a functioning Western-style democracy, for reasons of history, religion, and psychology too complex to discuss here. Expecting the Palestinian Authority to become an exception—and to do so more or less overnight, while simultaneously ridding itself of its existing political leadership—is either naive or disingenuous. Since the President's speech was the product of long and com-

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prehensive consultations between Washington and Jerusalem, naivete is not an option.

The second problem is that, even if the tunnel could be traversed, the light offered to the Palestinians is not attractive enough to inspire the effort. Chairman Arafat and his corrupt cronies will have no incentive to comply, and, thus, Mr. Bush's target audience remains unclear. Even if there were potential American allies within the Palestinian leadership, they would need a far more attractive package to convince them to risk their reputations—and, quite possibly, lives—by confronting Arafat. "Conditional" statehood, a murky and ambiguous concept, will never provide the rallying cry for a new, "moderate" Palestinian leadership.

The third problem is that Bush's concept leaves U.S. policy firmly in the grips of Israeli decisionmakers. He has made even the limited Israeli withdrawal to the positions of September 2000 conditional on Palestinian "progress toward security." A single suicide bombing could lead the Israeli cabinet to conclude that "progress" has been compromised. Bush's statement that Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories should be "consistent with the recommendations of the Mitchell report" ensures that Israel can stall for as long as she pleases. And finally, Mr. Bush's three-year timeline means that the Palestinians will not get their statehood if Israel decides that the hypothetical new Palestinian leadership is not demonstrating "real performance." As long as the criteria for measuring Palestinian "progress" remain undefined, the Israeli government has ample excuse for postponing statehood *ad infinitum*.

The fourth problem is that greater democracy in Palestine, like elsewhere in the Muslim world, plays into the hands of the hardliners. Washington's demand for Arafat's ouster will bolster his popularity at a time when his standing among his own people was in decline. Arafat is aware of the political capital that he has been given by the President; opposing or criticizing him now will appear tantamount to siding with America and Israel. In addition, continuing Israeli military actions will further erode the resentment against his team's ineptitude, corruption, and mismanagement. He will try to seize the day: Only two days after the President's speech, the Palestinian Authority announced that presidential and legislative elections would be held next January. If Arafat runs and wins again—as he probably will—U.S. policy will be painted into a corner of Sharon's making. Refusing to talk to him would freeze the *status quo*, while accepting him yet again as an interlocutor would further diminish Mr. Bush's credibility.

This is a no-win situation for the United States. Worse still, the likely long-term "democratic" alternative to Arafat is not a "pro-Western moderate" but an Islamic militant. As former senator George Mitchell, author of the Mitchell Report, has warned, "There's a risk that someone from Hamas or Islamic Jihad could succeed Arafat, which would make it much, much worse than the current situation." Support among the Palestinians for those extremist groups has more than doubled since the start of the *intifada*, almost matching the 30-percent support levels Arafat enjoys.

The fifth and most serious problem with Mr. Bush's "vision" is its *lack* of vision. His State Department will continue to act incrementally: put together a ceasefire, then "build trust," then get a "peace process" under way, all the while leaving the vexing political issues for later. That has been tried and found wanting. Another failure is inevitable. The vicious cycle of terror and military attacks can only be broken by a fair and comprehensive end-of-conflict political agreement. The 1993 Oslo Accords that collapsed, and the subsequent Mitchell and Tenet stillborn plans, were all based on incremental "confidence-building"—steps that failed to end the violence or to build any confidence at all.

In order to break the structural deadlock, America needs to develop a detailed political blueprint for a final settlement, which the two sides are unwilling or unable to negotiate for themselves. The key criterion should be the American interest, pragmatically and quantifiably defined, rather than the goals of certain ethnic-religious lobbies and special-interest groups that seek to impose their own agenda on the rest of America. That interest includes the continued existence of the state of Israel, on geopolitical rather than emotional, moral, or biblical grounds. It therefore demands a settlement that would remove the constant threat to Israel's existence from its Arab neighbors. The concept of "land for peace" is still fundamentally valid, but it needs to be rethought. Israel must give up Gaza and most of the West Bank, of course, where the Palestinians will establish their own independent state. In return, the Palestinians and other Arabs must formally relinquish all claims on the Jewish state. In addition, adjustments must be made to the pre-1967 borders, with Israel and the Palestinians swapping territory and Jerusalem being divided but shared. These are real goals, and they demand real strategies. Interim states and provisional states, limited sovereignties, and similar silly constructs are neither real nor useful.

America must learn how to pressure Israel to accomplish the structural requirements for a stable peace in the Middle East and, in the longer term, to save Israel from her own failed policies. There are two tools: American-made military hardware, Israel's use of which should be far more closely monitored; and money—presently ten million dollars a day in direct subsidies. Both must be used for everyone's good, including Israel's. George W. Bush's present refusal to do so may be seen as a victory for Ariel Sharon and for the Amen Corner in Washington. As we enter the third year of murderous violence in the Middle East, neither Israel nor the United States can afford many more such victories. ◇

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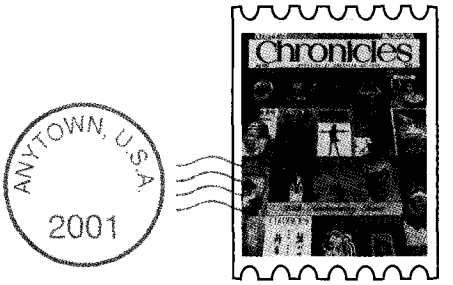

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CULTURE

A Brief History of Food

by Chris Segura

In 1960, novelist John Steinbeck circled the country in a pickup truck with a standard-bred poodle named Charley in a sort of cultural vision quest. What he found was not always a pretty sight.

His observations, published as *Travels With Charley: In Search of America*, included the prediction that his fellow Californians would lose the local flavor of their speech: "Just as our bread, mixed and baked, packaged and sold without benefit of accident or human frailty, is uniformly good and uniformly tasteless, so will our speech become one speech." Steinbeck qualified his nostalgia, pointing out that:

> it was a rare home that baked good bread in the old days. Mother's cooking was with rare exceptions poor, that good un-pasteurized milk touched only by flies and bits of manure crawled with bacteria, the healthy old-time life was riddled with aches, sudden death from unknown causes and that sweet local speech I mourn was a child of illiteracy and ignorance.

Four decades after his prediction, U.S. census figures for 2000 showed a distinct drop in cultural identity, even though the population had grown by 13 million since 1990, largely through immigration.

Cuisine and culture, indeed cuisine and humanity itself, are inextricably linked. Among the earliest known human discoveries was soup, which (as Carson I.A. Ritchie speculated in *Food in Civilization*) may have been created to nurse invalids. The world's oldest profession may not have been what everybody says it was, although it does have to do with the flesh.

A recent study that traced the origins of languages around the world determined that language began in the Balkans and that the first words likely had to do with the internal organs of animals, the most digestible raw animal protein of hunter/gatherer societies. Perhaps, then, the first profession was that of the friendly neighborhood butcher. Unlike practitioners of the other profession, who have been prosecuted for centuries, independent meat merchants have flourished for tens of thousands of years, not always with respect but certainly with a measure of job security . . . until now.

Neighborhood meat markets and independent abattoirs may soon be extinct, many fear, like some of the animal species that provided the first flesh for human consumption. Small meat markets and slaughterhouses are going out of business in America at an alarming rate.

In a recent article, Albert Schupp of the Louisiana State University Department of Economics said that there are only 26 meat retailers in Louisiana that are small enough (under ten employees) to be exempt from inspection by the USDA and only 40 slaughterhouses in all 64 parishes of the state. Until recently, hundreds of these small slaughterhouses flourished within the state.

Behind the trend, Schupp argues, are the "tremendous economics of scale." In other words, bigger is cheaper. "The giant consumer outlets are simply running the small-time businessman out of the game . . . It is extremely difficult for these small plants to compete." Another difficulty on the economic side, according to Schupp, is that the big packers can market practically every inch of every animal they butcher. The smaller processor "can't really utilize the byproducts," he argues. "About the only thing they salvage from it is the skin."

With the demise of the small meat retailer, specialty products are "just going to disappear," he said, almost wistfully listing items essential to the traditional Cajun culinary palette, now world-famous and one of the few remaining culturally distinguishable American cuisines: "*debris*, stuffed tongue, *grillardes*, [*boudin* and] *chaudin* . . ."

Boudin and *chaudin* are specially prepared and stuffed pork intestines. (The very word "pork," by the way, is a prime example of the linkage of culture, language, and food. It entered the English lexicon after the French-speaking Normans conquered the Saxons in the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Suddenly, a pig in a Saxon pen became *porc* on a Norman table.) *Chaudin* is a pork stomach stuffed with a variety of meat, herbs, and seasonings. *Boudin* (of the white and now FDA-banned red or "blood sausage" varieties) is a pork intestine filled with meat and rice. Both followed the Cajun culture from Normandy to the establishment of Acadia in what are now the Maritime Provinces of Canada in 1604. The roots of the dishes, however, go back to ancient Rome and Greece. They are also culturally related to the most American of foods: the hot dog.

Stomach-stuffing certainly goes back to ancient Greece. Nearly 3,000 years ago, Homer, in Book XX of the *Odyssey*, described Ulysses' anguish this way:

> Thus he chided with his heart, and checked it into endurance, but he tossed about as one who turns a paunch full of blood and fat in front of a hot fire, doing it first on one side and then on the other, that he may get it cooked as soon as possible . . .

The recipe for the *chaudin* variety of stuffed pork stomachs remained intact over the centuries. It is a difficult product to find, however, given the highly specialized market and the time-consuming, unpleasant chore of preparing a stomach for stuffing. One *chaudin*-maker said that he would "rather spend a week with my ex-wife than clean another one."

The sausage industry has had its ups and downs over the millennia. Food historians say stuffed intestines began by accident during an unsavory moment at the feast of the Lupercal in ancient Rome, when Gaius, a cook at Caesar's court, allegedly cut open a roasted hog that had been purged of offal by a week's starvation to find that it had not been disemboweled and, *voilà*!, sausage casing!

The discovery meant a great deal to Gaius and to Caesar, as it does to the International Casing Group, Inc. Their website declares, "Today literally thousands of varieties of sausage are produced worldwide" utilizing three basic types of sausage casings: natural, collagen, and cellulose. Collagen is derived from a gelatin formed by boiling connective tis-

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sue and bones. Cellulose is an inert carbohydrate produced in the cell walls of plants. "Collagen and cellulose casings are newcomers in the artificial casings field," the website explains, but natural casings are "still the preferred choice among discriminating sausage chefs everywhere."

In America, the most popular sausage is the "frankfurter" or "wiener," indispensable to Independence Day celebrations. Many innovations in the original recipe were introduced in the 20th century, including the use of turkey or chicken instead of pork, largely because of increasing health awareness (though poultry-stuffed hot dogs have, on more than one occasion, been traced to outbreaks of salmonella and *E. coli*). Modern ingredients also include a long list of "additives." One additive, though, is original: nitrate, a preservative which gives modern hot dogs a common flavor, color, and texture. Nitrates have been used for centuries to combat botulism.

About 20 years ago, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration commissioned a study by the National Academy of Sciences, which concludes that the only negative result of ingesting nitrate is a digestive-reaction product called "nitrosamines." The benefits far outweigh the detriments of nitrate, which occurs naturally in carrots and green vegetables. Nitrate also helps in blood clotting and healing wounds and burns and is said to boost immunity in combating tumor cells. (On the other hand, before the FDA was established, another common "additive" to several types of meat products, including wieners, was sawdust.)

The origin of the modern-day "weenie" is German or Austrian. "Frankfurter" comes from Frankfurt, Germany, which celebrated the 500th anniversary of the famous sausage's invention a few years ago. The Viennese claim the "wiener" as well as, of course, the Vienna sausage.

The proliferation of hot dogs on the North American continent is generally credited to German immigrant entrepreneurs of the late-19th century. Its emergence as a national dish, however, probably dates from 1902, when the first hot dog was sold at a New York Giants baseball game. Baseball was the national pastime, passionately followed by most Americans. It was easy to extend this nationalistic fervor to hot dogs.

The early Church is said to have declared the eating of sausages sinful, because of the casing's Lupercalian roots. Emperor Constantine the Great also banned the sausage. It may have been a sin as well to attempt to pass sawdust off as meat in the hot dogs of the early 20th century; it was certainly an action worthy of correction by the FDA. The agency's banning of pig blood in red *boudin*, however, is generally deplored in Cajun country.

It would have been much worse, however, if the main ingredient of the delicacy had been condemned: rice, a food that currently feeds much of the world. Rice has had an enormous impact on virtually every society on the globe since its cultivation began at least 12,000 years ago in Asia. It has also had an enormous impact on the politics of United States, including the War Between the States.

South Carolina was the first state with a vibrant rice-based economy. It was also the first to agitate for secession after Abraham Lincoln and his Republican Party came to power. On December 20, 1860, six Georgetown, South Carolina, rice growers met in Charleston with representatives from throughout the state and signed an "Ordinance of Secession." The elite society there was known as the "Rice Culture." The plantation owners declared a "Planters' War for Southern Independence." Other states followed the Rice Culture's lead.

Scholars at the International Rice Research Institute believe rice began spreading across the Himalayas to China two to three million years ago, when migration of fauna across the mountain range was still possible. The animals brought wild rice, depositing it in neat packets of fertilizer. The climate of Central Asia and northern China proved ideal for the cultivation of rice.

In many of the dialects of Asia, the words for "rice" and "food" are synonymous. Hindu and Buddhist holy writings frequently mention rice, and both religions make use of the grain as an offering to the gods. However, rice is not mentioned in either the Old Testament or early Egyptian records.

Archeological evidence has established that rice was an important food in the Mohenjo-Daro culture of the Indus Valley, in what is now western India and Pakistan, as early as 2500 B.C. It was also an important food source in the late Neolithic period of the Yangtze Basin of China. In 1966, pottery shards carbondated from at least 4000 B.C. were found in the Korat region of Thailand with imprints of rice grains and husks. Other plant remains dating from 10,000 B.C. were discovered in Spirit Cave on the Thailand-Myanmar border.

The latest figures from the World Health Organization indicate that there are still 800 million hungry people on the planet. Thus, Steinbeck's qualification in *Travels With Charley* may prove to be more valid and compelling than his nostalgia. Today, just as it was 35,000 years ago on the frigid European continent, the real value of cuisine is human survival rather than good taste.

Chris Segura, a journalist, novelist, and short-story writer, writes from his hometown of Abbeville, Louisiana.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Lincoln and the Death of the Old Republic

by Joseph E. Fallon

Official history venerates Abraham Lincoln as an apostle of American democracy who waged war on the South to preserve the Union and free the slaves. Official history is a lie.

Lincoln was a dictator who destroyed the Old Republic and replaced the federal principles of 1789 with the ideological foundations of today's welfare/warfare state. His administration was characterized by paranoia, a lust for power, and rampant corruption. The magnitude of that paranoia was evidenced by Lincoln's secretary of war, Edwin M. Stanton, who declared that "Every department of the Government was paralyzed by treason." "Traitors" were to be found

> in the Senate, in the House of Representatives, in the Cabinet, in the Federal Courts . . . Treason was flagrant in the revenue and in the post-office service, as well as in the Territorial governments and in the judicial reserves.

In his bid for absolute power, Lincoln used "treason" as a pretext to unleash war and shred the Constitution. Freedom of the press was curtailed. The *Chicago Times* was one of over 300 Northern

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newspapers suppressed for expressing "incorrect" views. As late as May 18, 1864, Lincoln ordered his military to "arrest and imprison . . . the editors, proprietors and publishers of the *New York World* and the *New York Journal of Commerce*."

Lincoln suspended *habeas corpus*. He criminalized speech and legalized arbitrary arrests. Twenty thousand political prisoners were held incommunicado and denied legal counsel. Maryland's legislature was overthrown, and New York City was placed under military occupation.

In his December 1861 lectures in Boston and New York City, Northern abolitionist Wendell Phillips declared that "We live today, every one of us, under martial law. The Secretary of State puts into his bastile, with a warrant as irresponsible as that of Louis XIV, any man whom he pleases."

Lincoln's war against the South was not to preserve the Union from treasonous secessionists. Lincoln himself had championed the right of secession. In a speech before Congress on the Mexican-American War, he declared that "Any people anywhere being inclined and having the power have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better."

Nor did Lincoln wage war against the South to emancipate black slaves. In his First Inaugural Address, on March 4, 1861, Lincoln emphatically declared: "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so."

On September 11, 1861, Lincoln countermanded General Fremont's order freeing the slaves in Missouri. And on May 19, 1862, he countermanded General Hunter's order emancipating the slaves in Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. On August 22, 1862, Lincoln wrote to Horace Greeley, declaring:

> If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

With the demise of the Confederacy nowhere in sight, however, Lincoln changed his position on emancipation. On September 13, 1862, Lincoln explained to a visiting delegation of clergy the purpose of his forthcoming Emancipation Proclamation: "I view this matter as a practical war measure, to be decided on according to the advantages or disadvantages it may offer to the suppression of the rebellion."

That the Emancipation Proclamation was "a practical war measure" can be seen in the fact that it did not free a single slave within the jurisdiction of the Union. The proclamation only declared that "all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforth, and forever free." Slavery remained legally protected in those slave states that stayed loyal to the Union—Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and West Virginia—and in those portions of the Confederacy under Union occupation.

The Emancipation Proclamation was an act of military desperation designed to realize two goals. Lincoln hoped, first, to dissuade the British and the French governments from intervening militarily on behalf of the South. As Lincoln noted, the Emancipation Proclamation "would help us in Europe, and convince them that we are incited by something more than ambition." Second, Lincoln hoped to incite slaves to murder defenseless white women and children on the farms and in the cities of the Confederacy in the expectation that the Confederate army would disintegrate as soldiers abandoned the field to return home to save the lives of their families. Lincoln justified this goal by asserting:

> . . . I have a right to take any measure which may best subdue the enemy; nor do I urge objections of a moral nature, in view of possible consequences of insurrection and massacre at the South.

In issuing his Emancipation Proclamation as an incitement for a race war, Lincoln was continuing his policy of violating both the Constitution and international law. Food and medicine had already been declared contraband. Later, Lincoln issued "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field" (General Orders, No. 100, 1863), authorizing starvation and bombardment of Southern women and children.

Since the Emancipation Proclamation was "a practical war measure," its enforcement was determined by whether it advanced Lincoln's war effort. As a consequence, when Lincoln's Army arrived, "freed" Southern slaves often found themselves re-enslaved under the fiction of a one-year work contract. They could suffer a loss of pay or rations for acts of laziness, disobedience, or insolence and had to obtain a pass to leave the plantation. Provost marshals ensured that they displayed "faithful service, respectful deportment, correct discipline and perfect subordination."

Other "freed" Southern slaves found themselves forced to build installations and fortifications for Lincoln's Army or were violently conscripted.

In a May 1862 report, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Chase was advised that

> The negroes were sad . . . Sometimes whole plantations, learning what was going on, ran off to the woods for refuge . . . This mode of [enlistment by] violent seizure is repugnant.

As late as February 7, 1865, Lincoln wrote to Lieutenant Colonel Glenn, operating in Kentucky: "Complaint is made to me that you are forcing negroes into the military service, and even torturing them."

In *The Plundering Generation*, Ludwell H. Johnson summarized the real reasons for Lincoln's violent opposition to the South's independence:

> Manufacturers feared the loss of American markets to a flood of cheap British goods pouring through a free-trade Confederacy; Northern shippers feared the loss of their monopoly of the coasting trade and their share of the trans-Atlantic carrying trade; merchants feared the loss of the profits they garnered as middlemen between the South and Europe; creditors feared the loss of Southern debts; the Old Northwest feared the loss or curtailment of the Mississippi trade; the Republicans feared the disintegration of their party should it let the South go and bring upon the North all of the consequences just mentioned.

Lincoln waged war on the South, however, to achieve more than preservation of the *status quo*. War was the means to

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establish the North's hegemony over the political and economic life of the United States. War offered Lincoln, his party, and Northern special interests a continental empire to exploit. And they did so with ruthless abandon.

In the North, Lincoln's Congress imposed excise taxes on virtually all items; raised the protective tariff to the highest level in the country's history (under the Morrill Act of 1861); issued paper currency (Legal Tender Act of 1862); awarded Northern railroad companies government loans and extensive land grants (Pacific Railway Act of 1862); unilaterally repealed Indian land claims; promoted settlement of Western lands by Northerners (Homestead Act of 1862); effectively "nationalized" the country's financial institutions (National Banking Acts of 1863 and 1864); and furnished Northern businesses with cheap labor (Contract Labor Law of 1864).

In the South, Congress authorized the theft of tens, if not hundreds, of millions of dollars worth of Southern property (Confiscation Acts of 1861 and 1862, Direct Tax Act of 1862, and Captured and Abandoned Property Act of 1863). The cotton, alone, that the North stole has been conservatively valued at $100 million.

This legalized robbery was in addition to the plundering by Lincoln's Army. In December 1864, Sherman wrote, "I estimate the damage done to the State of Georgia . . . at $100,000,000; at least $20,000,000 of which has inured to our advantage, and the remainder is simple waste and destruction."

With Lincoln came the wholesale corruption of the political system. In 1864, Edward Bates, Lincoln's attorney general, lamented that "the demoralizing effect of this civil war is plainly visible in every department of life. The abuse of official powers and thirst for dishonest gain are now so common that they cease to shock."

As Henry S. Olcott, special investigator for the U.S. War and Navy Departments, revealed in *The War's Carnival of Fraud* (1878), "at least twenty, if not twenty-five, percent of the entire expenditures of the government during the Rebellion, were tainted with fraud." Later estimates put the level of fraud involving Army contracts at 50 percent.

Such institutional corruption defines the post-constitutional America that Lincoln created. The destruction of the Old Republic ensured the entrenchment of a permanent kleptocracy. That is Lincoln's legacy. Since 1861, the United States has had a government of special interests, by special interests, and for special interests, dedicated to the proposition that their power and profits "shall not perish from the earth."

Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.

COMMUNITY

Buy Local

by Steve Berg

There seems to be a common theme in modern libertarian thought that stresses the merits of giant corporate enterprises, claiming that they are infinitely superior to smaller, less capitalized, local businesses. One article that I read extolled the virtues of chain bookstores *versus* their benighted independent "competition." My interest here is personal: I work part-time at the last remaining local independent bookstore in DeKalb, Illinois, which is now going out of business. When I realized that I needed a break from my research, could use some additional spending money, and wanted to enjoy the company of intelligent, literate people, my first choice was to work at my favorite bookstore. Now, a major bookstore chain has moved here, and the city has announced that the new store will get government subsidies through a special taxing district. My employer has never been subsidized.

I have been a customer at this local bookstore virtually since it first opened its doors. I have also happily spent my meager funds in the other locally owned and operated stores and restaurants that have graced my favorite town for many years. I realize, of course, that the independent merchants do not offer the huge selection found at the chain stores. Local vendors' prices are generally higher as well. So how is it that I, a seasoned graduate of the Mises University, am so obtuse as to choose not to optimize my utility by buying my goodies at the lowest possible price?

With all due respect to those tainted by Jacobinism, who think that "Economic Man" is an actual human being and a role model for us all, I perceive that there are other costs associated with focusing merely on the stated prices for goods and services. For example: A relative of mine lives in a small, rural Iowa town. He is increasingly concerned about the declining viability of its downtown business district. Yet, whenever there is some shopping to be done, he hops into his luxury car and speeds to the Wal-Mart in a nearby town. My father has chided him for this. If he does not patronize local merchants, how can he expect locally owned businesses to survive, much less prosper?

Supporting local businesses is a value, as is buying for the lowest possible price. I have noticed that, despite my rigorous professional training in value-free public administration, my fellow municipal bureaucrats still believe that keeping a town prosperous is a worthy goal, even if only to keep the income stream from sales taxes flowing into the municipal coffers. Economic Man believes that the lowest possible purchase price optimizes the utility of everyone. If this means that local endeavors fall by the wayside and are crushed by larger corporations, then, by the iron laws of Business Darwinism, that is just fine and dandy.

Community Man, however, takes a different view. He recognizes that money spent at a chain store tends to leave town as fast as most bank robbers. Local merchants may be a greedy lot, but they have roots in the community and a vested interest in its overall health. Management personnel at chain stores, on the other hand, are transferred frequently. I suspect that this is done deliberately so that the seeds of community never manage to sprout in them and they develop loyalty to their corporate masters, not to their neighbors in the places they briefly live during their transitory careers. For these managers, the towns and cities where they reside during their travels tend to blur together.

While traveling in central Texas a few years back, I was bypassing Dallas-Fort Worth on the interstate highway. Suddenly, it struck me: The place looked vaguely familiar. How could this be? I had not driven there before. Then it became obvious: The billboards along the highway, the architecture of the buildings, and even the landscaping all looked the same there as they do in northern California, urban Colorado, eastern Massachusetts, the lower Hudson Valley in New York, or the Yuppie Belt surrounding Chicago.

During my thankfully brief fling with

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yuppiedom years ago, I bought the obligatory copy of *Dress for Success*. (While the book did not help me much, I gave it to a close friend who has since excelled in his chosen profession, married a gorgeous former singing star, and fathered two gifted and exceptional children.) Back then, I noted that the courageous image I had held of corporate tycoons was not necessarily accurate. An employee or sales rep calling on these firms had to conform carefully to rigid requirements regarding dress and deportment. Any departure from these norms would swiftly and surely destroy his career or, at least, preclude a sale. I thought this odd. Should not the business world, so esteemed for efficiency and effectiveness, care more about substance than appearance? Apparently not.

As the years went by, I discovered that the corporate world was heavily influenced by a misperception of the military ethos—thus the uniform clothing and the rigid hierarchy of command and control. Management theorists such as Fayol openly copied military ideas. According to these theories, in business, as in the military, most people are interchangeable, expendable cannon fodder. It is not surprising that corporate culture cultivates a certain blandness and similarity. Those who can conform to the corporate rules (the sheep) tend to "get ahead," while the rest of us (the goats) are discarded by Darwinian forces of nature and go elsewhere.

I have noticed that those who support subsidized chain stores moving into DeKalb tend to say such things as, "At last we are moving up in the world! Now we can shop just like everyone else!" In other words, "success" and "making it" as a city depend on being just like everyone else. These people tend to give short shrift to the local merchants who have worked long and hard to satisfy local tastes and have a real stake in the community.

Now, I realize that some libertarians really believe that the free market will automatically solve the problems of community, just like it solves every other problem. Indeed, the market will come into play, but so does the Law of Unintended Consequences. The initially low price of items purchased at major chain retailers is definitely attractive. It is also something that can be immediately ascertained. However, there are other cost factors. Downtown areas of our towns and cities tend to become more rundown as local merchants have less and less money to spend on upkeep. As downtown businesses fail at an accelerating rate, passersby heading to the malls on the outskirts of town may take note of the boarded-up storefronts. Other less savory businesses may move in to take advantage of declining rents. Eventually, the area becomes thoroughly blighted. Most of the buildings either are abandoned or house those businesses that cater to vice rather than virtue. If there is any civic pride left, the citizenry may demand that the municipal government "do something about the downtown."

While the aforementioned libertarians might view this as akin to summoning the forces of darkness, this is what commonly occurs. This is not a case of "market failure." The fallout from the general tendency to make purchases solely on the basis of price changes the venue from an economic market to a political one. This is where people like me have to ride to the rescue. Keeping downtowns viable is one of the most pressing concerns in municipal governance and administration these days. One community development director told me that it costs roughly six times more to fix up existing structures than to build new ones in greenfields. Yet, he said, it is imperative to foster this sort of renovation because that is the best way to avoid decline and decay. He strongly supports code enforcement in existing structures as a means to this end.

While it may come as a shock to many libertarians, a fair number of us in local government public administration have a strong degree of paleoconservative sentiment. One of my former bosses once accurately characterized a rent-seeking developer (to his face) as a "damned socialist" on a local talk-radio show. Many of us do our best to use market processes whenever possible in order to maintain and renovate the municipalities where we toil. We try very hard to enhance the sense of community in our towns, while minimizing tax liabilities for citizens. The better sort of administrators try to avoid government subsidies.

My experience has taught me that the best way to minimize local government interference in the free market, maintain a healthy and diverse local business community, and strike a blow against ugly corporatist conformity is to avoid patronizing mega-retailers, except as a last resort. There is no reason why we cannot do our part to maintain the individuality, charm, and vitality of our own communities by supporting them in their entrepreneurial ventures with civic pride, economic wisdom, and enlightened purchasing habits. Take into account the *full* cost of your purchases. Patronize stores owned by your friends and neighbors. If their stock does not include what you want, ask them to place an order. Most local shops are very happy to oblige their customers. The prices at these small businesses may seem higher, but you are really buying a better community in which to live.

Steve Berg writes from DeKalb, Illinois.

LIBERAL ARTS

BANG A GONG

"Above, people bang a large drum Thursday during a therapeutic session held at California State University, Northridge. The event was open to anyone troubled by the terrorist attacks last week. At top, Joy Krauthammer hits a smaller drum. More than 100 attended the event offered by Ronald Borczon, a music therapy professor."

—from a caption in "Grief with a Beat," a photo spread published in the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin *of Ontario, California*

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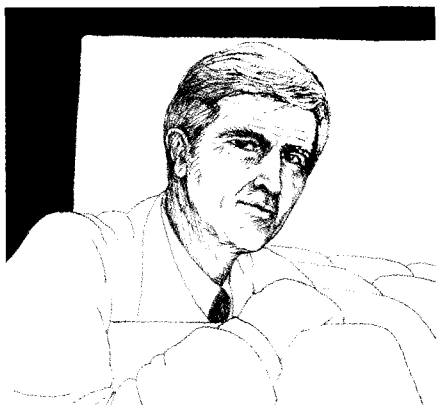
by George McCartney

Artless Imitations



The Importance of Being Earnest

Produced and distributed by Miramax Films
Directed by Oliver Parker
Screenplay by Oliver Parker from Oscar Wilde's play

The Sum of All Fears

Produced and distributed by Paramount Pictures
Directed by Phil Alden Robinson
Screenplay by Paul Attanasio and Daniel Pyne from Tom Clancy's novel

Oscar Wilde believed one's first duty in life was to be as artificial as possible. This, he reasoned, was a corollary to the inescapable truth that nature as we know it invariably imitates art. Paradoxical? Not in the least. Only provocative. Wilde simply stated anew this self-evident thesis: We cannot see the world except through the prisms of language and numbers. Better to acknowledge this truth frankly than to mistake the figurative for the actual. As devoted to symbolism as he was, Wilde also realized that outworn imaginative forms could become traps barring us from new and more creative modes of thought. Anyone who has compared Roman with Arabic numerals knows how necessary it is at times to sacrifice venerable but cumbersome tradition for nimbler means of apprehending reality.

Accordingly, Wilde's finest work, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, stands poised on the knife-edge dividing nature from artifice, flesh from word. It asks us to reconsider what we think we know about ourselves and our world. As such, his play requires exquisitely self-conscious performances. The actors must play their stylized roles knowingly, revealing themselves to be as fully aware as we are that they are creatures of a script. Unfortunately, in Oliver Parker's adaptation, all but one of the performers fail on this account. Only Reese Witherspoon, the lone American in the cast, seems to know what Wilde required. As the ingenue Cecily Cardew, her studied spontaneity gives her character just the right amalgam of cloistered innocence and brazen experience. If only the other performers were as nimble. Colin Firth makes Jack Worthing a dour dodderer; Rupert Everett's Algernon is never more than bitchy; Frances O'Connor's Gwendolen is pretty but regrettably guileless; and—the biggest disappointment—Judi Dench's Lady Bracknell speaks her lines with a frostiness wholly devoid of self-regarding irony. All this can be traced to Parker's evident misunderstanding of the play. He takes it to be a light comedy of late Victorian manners instead of what it really is: a witty inquiry into the mediating forms through which we're vain enough to suppose we know ourselves.

In short, Parker has failed to give Wilde his due. This is nowhere more apparent than in his decision to open the play cinematically, taking it out of its theatrical home into the hurly-burly of London. Here, among other distractions, we watch Gwendolen having her rump tattooed with Ernest, the name she adores. I suppose Parker thought this was cute and modern. Instead, it's merely vulgar. Worse, it misses the point. Although Gwendolen insists she could never marry a man so obtuse that he forgot to have himself christened Ernest, the play's title gives the lie to her headstrong absurdity. Contrary to the text, it spells the name "Earnest." Surely, this was Wilde's clue that Gwendolen's obsession is less with a name than with finding a man to love her unconditionally. Elsewhere, Parker reveals Lady Bracknell to have been a chorus girl who acquired her aristocratic standing by seducing Lord Bracknell. Cute again, but wholly untrue to the play, which, among other things, wants to explode ingrained upper-class pretensions. Were Lady Bracknell to have been a high-kicking bloomer girl in youth, her aristocratic arrogance could hardly be thought ingrained.

Worst of all, however, is the handbag. The play's central conceit arises when a nanny aptly named Miss Prism confuses an infant in her care with a manuscript of a three-volume novel. In a moment of mental abstraction, she deposits the baby in a more than usually capacious handbag and tosses the text into a perambulator. As usual, Wilde's farce is in earnest. His point is that life and art are routinely confused in the course of human affairs. For better and for worse, our lives are inescapably shaped by our species' collective imagination encoded in our various social conventions, including such doubtful manifestations as the Victorian triple-decker romantic novel. (Anyone who has had to endure a Martha Stewart-inspired wedding reception knows this to be all too true.) Not satisfied with Miss Prism's recitation of her error, Parker has decided to show it to us. In flashback, we watch her lower the infant into that notorious handbag. This is an unpardonable gaucherie. By rendering the play's conceit literal, Parker robs it of its power to amuse and suggest. Once seen, the error is merely ridiculous.

Parker's film is not without amusement, but it is not the amusement Wilde intended. It is worth seeing in the way a college production of *Hamlet* is worth attending. It evokes the elements of the play, however poorly understood, so that we can recall its wonders in better productions. Of course, if you would prefer the real thing, find Anthony Asquith's 1952 film on video. This masterful and hilarious adaptation is played flawlessly by Michael Redgrave, Edith Evans, Margaret Rutherford, and Joan Greenwood, among others. They knew exactly what Wilde meant.

Despite its evident artificiality, *The Sum of All Fears* would not have won Wilde's applause. His green carnation would have wilted once he realized that director Phil Alden Robinson expects us to take this rancid confection straight: no effete self-consciousness here! This is blood-and-guts manliness ripped from

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the pages of that cold-eyed martial realist Tom Clancy. Of course, those less demanding than Wilde may find its shenanigans a hoot. I was troubled, however, by the all-too sobering premise ticking away at the center of this otherwise absurdly clockwork narrative.

The film opens with an Israeli A4 fighter armed with a nuclear bomb being shot down on the Golan Heights during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Twenty-nine years later, an Arab farmer discovers the bomb and sells it to a terrorist organization. (The film explains that the otherwise nuclear-innocent Israel just happened to come into possession of this weapon through the good offices of the CIA. We're further instructed by helpful captions that the Israelis had been forced to consider using it when it appeared their army would be overrun on the ground. Somehow, this information did little to dispel my real-world misgivings about what's currently transpiring in the Middle East.) With this as his plot trigger, Robinson calls in everyone's favorite CIA analyst, Jack Ryan (Ben Affleck).

A confession before proceeding: I've never been able to make it through an entire Clancy novel. Of course, I'm proud as can be that a mick like myself has put Americans on notice that a man named Ryan stands between them and perdition. Nevertheless, I have little staying power when it comes to the techno talk that fills his narratives. What I have gleaned from the little I've read is that Clancy is a fair-minded, tough-talking, populist conservative quite able to detect b.s. in high places. Assuming I'm right, this latest Ryan movie seriously betrays Clancy's political and moral inclinations, even though he is listed as its executive producer.

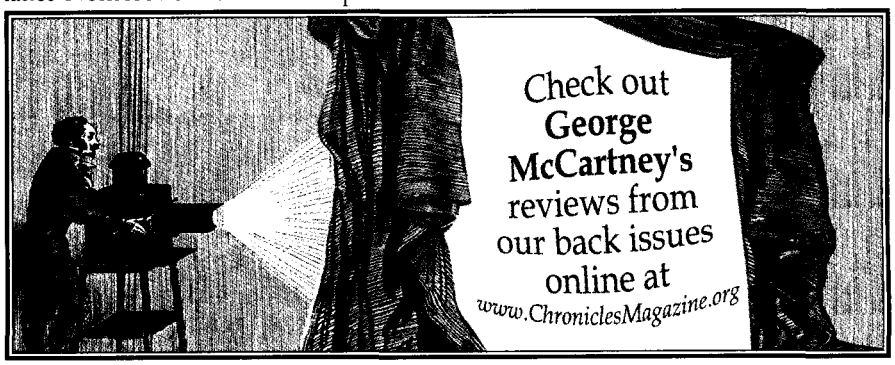
Robinson has sanitized Clancy's text with Hollywood's *de rigueur* cleanser. Gone are the Arab and the Native American terrorists. They have been replaced with more acceptable villains: a coterie of former Nazis in cahoots with a loosely knit network of right-wing movements (what else?) around the world. The leader of this organization, Dressler (a perfectly reptilian Alan Bates), exhibits such a virulent dedication to fascism that he's pleased to compare his ideology to AIDS. As with AIDS, he muses, fascism requires a strong host to spread itself. Although Hitler had been a willing carrier, he turned out to be inadequate to the job. He foolishly tried to take on America and Russia at once. Dressler, convinced that he's the stronger host, has a different strategy. He intends to provoke the superpowers into a mutually destructive war. Once the dust settles, he sneers, the fascist virus will become fully "airborne." What a premise! A fascist who thinks of his ideology as a viral scourge! Here's someone we can really hate to our heart's delight. No need for wimpy moral distinctions regarding America's provocations of the world's less fortunate. Like Ian Fleming's Ernst Blofeld, Dressler is a satisfyingly cartoonish archvillain.

There would be nothing wrong with this entertaining nonsense if the film did not claim to be a serious dramatization of our struggle against international terrorism. One scene in particular calls attention to the filmmakers' would-be high-mindedness. Ryan finds himself on a sea-borne launch headed for the wilds of the Ukraine with John Clark (Liev Schreiber), an enigmatic CIA commando. When it looks like there's going to be rough stuff, Clark, the seasoned warrior, hands the untried analyst a gun. "I'm not an operative," Affleck's Ryan protests in his best yuppie whine. "Relax, Double-O Seven," Clark chortles, leaving the neophyte to guard their boat as he conducts his mission onshore. Robinson puts us on notice: This isn't a James Bond fantasy; it's the real thing. (Sure. Hardened CIA operatives always press untrained, reluctant wimps like Affleck into commando derring-do. Those Langley boys, such jokers.)

Despite Robinson's denial of Bondian provenance, Affleck's Ryan becomes the one-man savior of his nation. When a Yeltsin-like Russian premier keels over from his excessive habits—too much booze and, this being a Hollywood production, elevated cholesterol—no one at the CIA knows anything about his successor, Nemerov. No one, that is, but Ryan, who just happened to write a book on this Soviet-nurtured statesman. Quickly and, of course, accurately, Ryan takes Nemerov's measure and predicts his likely intentions. This makes Ryan so indispensable to formulating American policy that he's instantly installed in the U.S. president's Cabinet meetings. As for Nemerov, needless to say, he is a noble-minded, American-loving moderate. He's even read Ryan's book with warm approval. Later, as Dressler's plot gathers momentum, Ryan unravels it all by his lonesome. And, of course, he always manages to be where the action is. When the Bond franchise foists its fooleries on us, the Broccolis at least have the grace to issue us a license to laugh. Robinson, on the other hand, urges us to genuflect at the altar of his film's ersatz sincerity.

Despite its pretensions, *Sum* is moderately watchable, its portrayal of a small nuclear explosion being perhaps its best moment. Robinson makes the blast and its aftermath eerily convincing. Instead of ear-walloping, Dolby-surround-sound explosions, flying bodies, and timpanies beaten to the maximus, he pulls his camera back from the detonation and turns the sound off in order to render the shockwave's deafening and disorienting impact. Cars are slowly and silently blown over onto their roofs; a helicopter is soundlessly buffeted like a balloon caught in a sudden downdraft; shouting voices are muffled; colors are drained from the screen. It's like being in a ghastly dream from which you're struggling desperately to awaken. Robinson's restraint makes this climactic moment all the more unnerving. Then he throws it all away with cheap heroics, having Affleck run to ground zero *sans* radiation suit and duke it out with the nuclear perpetrator. Oh well, it's only a film, isn't it?

As I write, *The Sum of All Fears* is enjoying a huge return at the box office. It's clearly benefiting from its depiction of the kind of disaster that seems all too probable in the world we've created for ourselves. Could audiences be taking comfort in this gimcrack production? Surely, life has more dignity than to imitate the artless. ‹C›



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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Comments Anyway

Edward Paul Abbey
1927-1989

NO COMMENT

—Inscription on Edward Abbey's grave marker, Cabeza Prieta wilderness, Arizona

My friend Edward Abbey, dead these 13 years, is finally the subject of a formal biography, published last year by the University of Arizona Press and written by a man who never even met him. Most biographers, of course, have been unknown to their biographees, though the ratio is probably shifting on the contemporary literary scene, where a dwindling number of serious authors is unable to accommodate the burgeoning horde of hungry academic pilot fish so desperate for a literary shark to attach themselves to that they ingratiate themselves with established writers in their 40's and 50's in hopes of inheriting a rich literary legacy that can be parleyed, *via* a fat "authorized" biography, into a Full Professorship two or three decades down the road. More unusual in Abbey's case than the absence of any personal connection between subject and scholar is the institutional tie linking the late novelist and essayist with his Boswell's publishers, the Regents of the University of Arizona, where Abbey taught for some years and which elevated him, a year before he died, to the position of "Fool Professor" in his own right.

As publishers go, the University of Arizona Press is by no means a bad one. On the other hand, Abbey himself was not a university press writer, all of his books having been brought out by big trade houses in New York (Dutton, Little Brown, Henry Holt, Simon & Schuster). So why wasn't *Edward Abbey: A Life* (whether "authorized" or not, written with the cooperation at least of Ed's widow, Clarke) taken by one or another of the New York houses? Is it because Abbey was, as James M. Cahalan thinks, "one of the most underrated [writers of the first rank] in American literature"? Or because the New York critics in particular and Eastern ones in general refused to take him and his work seriously, as Ed himself believed? I'm guessing the true answer is more complicated than either one of these allows for, and more bearish in regard to Edward Abbey's lasting literary reputation than Cahalan is prepared either to see or admit. "When all the shouting is done about the man himself and his various causes, readers will return more quietly to Abbey's writings, discovering artistry and delight." As Ed's friend and admirer (from whom, moreover, I have learned much as a writer), I'd like to believe that. But I don't.

Edward Abbey and his friends, colleagues, and comrades in the early environmentalist movement of the 1950's, 60's, and 70's unintentionally prepared the way for a succeeding generation of environmentalists to overtake and supplant them, transform grassroots environmentalism into a bureaucratized agendum, and point it in a statist direction. It's the story of modern liberalism, of course. Though Ed Abbey considered himself a liberal, he was too independent-minded to be what he called "a good liberal"—and knew it. Too many of his friends, however—especially in the second half of his life—were. Ed's independence of mind, moreover, wasn't enough. (It never is.) His father was a fervent Marxist who voted socialist and subscribed to *Soviet Life* until his death, admired the Wobblies, and considered Castro's Cuba to be Utopia; his mother, a liberal Presbyterian who argued for the "right" of homosexuals to be ordained to the ministry. Her son, though he admired Christ as a great moral philosopher, was a life-long scoffer at "organized" religion. His master's thesis, defended at the University of New Mexico, was on anarchism (Godwin, Bakunin, Proudhon, Kropotkin, Sorel). Born in 1927, Edward Abbey was already middle-aged when the 60's revolutions occurred. Though they were finally too mass-minded and overproduced for his purposes, their anarchic spirit comported somewhat with his own. He married five times, twice to secular Jewish women from the greater New York area. (Two of his three sons are by Rita Deanin; his first daughter, by Judy Pepper.) An outspoken advocate of republican government and of the Second Amendment as a guarantor of individual rights and of liberty, he praised Robespierre as a hero for his role in destroying the Ancien Regime and striking a blow for universal freedom and enlightenment. Rejecting mainstream American culture, he was, to some extent, an unwitting product of the counterculture, its flip side.

Certain, if not most, books are unimaginable outside the period in which they were written. Writers are constricted in their art not by their talent and their personality alone but by their times, which help to shape and direct that talent and personality. As a man and as an artist, Edward Abbey was more a child of *his* times than he knew. Those times are gone now . . . for better and for worse. His career peaked coincidentally with the zenith of the *real* environmentalist movement before it was coopted by yuppies with computers and corporate grants—pushed upward by the same forces and, in many instances, by the same people. Now Ed is dead, and environmentalism with him. As Cahalan shows, the split between the genuine article and the counterfeit one began several years before Abbey's death, when immigration-environmentalists from the cities taunted him and Dave Foreman for being "racists" at the Earth First! summer rendezvous at Jacob Lake on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Ed Abbey proposed arresting Mexican immigrants at the border, putting guns in their hands, turning them around, and pointing them in the direction of Mexico City. Today, the Sierra Club, denying that mass immigration presents any particular threat to America's land and other natural resources, insists on global population control as the answer.

Following peak sales in the 1990's, Edward Abbey's 23 published books may in

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time lack an audience outside the Tucson literary cell centered on the University of Arizona and composed largely of surviving friends, fans, and Ed Abbey wannabes, plus a small but devoted following of unreconstructed paleo-environmentalists. As the environmentalist movement has passed from a band of scroungy, red-eyed, disorganized desert rats, river rats, mountain men, anarchists, rebels, and crotchety eccentrics devoted to the Old American ideal of liberty and independence to a slick, sophisticated political machine dedicated to socialism and the subservience of the individual to the state, so the older liberalism Abbey sought (in his way) to be loyal to and within which he was more or less comfortable has succumbed almost entirely to political correctness, with which he was not comfortable at all and which, in turn, have never been amused by him. Political correctness was already asserting itself at the end of Abbey's life, and he got his licks in before he died. At the time, his status as a romantic rebel protected his reputation against radioactive fallout, but even so, his contemptuous view of feminism and his bold opposition to immigration and Latin American culture were resented by many of his readers. They still are, by philistines incapable of appreciating what Cahalan nicely terms the "artistry and delight."

Honest liberals are necessarily embarrassed by the discrepancy between their pose of heroic resistance against almost insuperable odds and the fact that, in reality, they risk little or nothing at the hands of the power elite, which is themselves. Perhaps because he felt the need to take *real* risks in rebellion, Abbey was willing—or more than willing—to take potshots at liberal icons when the spirit moved him. Beyond that, however, Ed Abbey was always a liberal of the best and truest kind: Though what he believed was often untrue, he was *always* honest about what he believed. Nothing more in the way of praise can be said of any liberal. Ed's best essay, better even than the great "Immigration and Liberal Taboos," is "The Writer's Credo," in which he proposes the heretical idea that a writer who is unwilling to assume the author's responsibility to write the truth *as he sees it* should find something other than writing to do with his time. And he meant it. Liberalism's fatal flaw—its insistence on reducing complex metaphysical reality to slogans (Earth First!) and one-dimensional explanations—warped his thinking and was responsible for the naive, even adolescent aspect of his social, political, and economic ideas. Yet Ed Abbey is not a marginal writer; he is central to the truth-speaking tradition in American literature in much the same way that another American original, Edmund Wilson, was. Wilson, too, was a philosophical materialist and political liberal, with a tinge of anarchism deriving from the modern European tradition in his personal and intellectual makeup. Also like Abbey, he was a uniquely *Old American* character: tough, individualistic, independent, unintimidable; a man who always spoke his mind regardless of the consequences; a displaced product of America's republican past and an enemy of its imperial present; a fierce critic of mass culture and of society in the mass; iconoclastically contemptuous of the greatest of America's various idols, technology. (Unlike Abbey, who believed more consistently that industrial capitalism *and* socialism were equally dead ends, Wilson maintained a sympathy for socialist politics to the end of his life.)

Last but not least, both men were compulsive philanderers, either of whose list of conquests could have rivaled Leporello's. In love, Wilson was the more casual (not to say mechanical), Abbey, the more romantic, passionate—and adolescent. It was his fatal flaw, more so even than the alcoholism that killed him at age 62. Wilson, though he wrote up his affairs in clinical detail in his *Diaries*, compartmentalized his sexual and intellectual lives. Abbey ran them together, frequently conflating the two and even allowing the little head (as the saying goes) to do the intellectual heavy lifting for the big one. Sexual libertinism quite likely led his political thinking astray; certainly an essentially adolescent sexuality blighted and trivialized much of his fiction, in particular his favorite of his novels, *Black Sun*. Scott Fitzgerald once said that Ernest Hemingway's mistake was to have married the women he fell in love with. In a somewhat different sense, the same is true of Ed Abbey, whose motives in pursuing young women half—or less than half—his age were pure enough to lead him to the marriage bed, insufficiently so to ensure fidelity for longer than a few years, or even months. Moral theologians may disagree, yet from the secular point of view, lawful marriage was a mistake for most of the Abbey women, as Ed ruined the life of one of his wives (his fourth, Renée, whom he met when she was 16 and he, in his 40's) and partially wrecked those of two others. All three women seem permanently embittered. (Wife Number Three, Judy Pepper, died of leukemia at the age of 27 while still Mrs. Abbey). Before reading Cahalan's book, I was inclined to take a boys-will-be-boys attitude to Ed's "venalities." After finishing it, I have quite a different impression, the extent of Abbey's fornications and infidelities and the effects these had on innocent people being cumulatively depressing—in fact, appalling. Happily married at last, in his final years Ed worked hard to reform. His fifth and last wife, Clarke Cartwright (26 years his junior), let him understand that terrible things would ensue if Ed were unfaithful to her. More in the spirit of perfect contrition, as his health deteriorated and he faced the prospect of leaving his work, his last—and best—marriage, and his family incomplete, Abbey came to understand that the life worth living was the life lived for others, as he wrote in his diary. This was, of course, progress; and if Ed did not live to enjoy its fruits, perhaps he died to enjoy them.

For years, I've said that, had Ed Abbey lived another ten years, he'd have ended up writing for *Chronicles*. (He was right on so many things, after all: Nature and man's rootedness in it, political liberty, republicanism, guns, the differentiation of the sexes, the military-industrial complex, technological abstraction, industrial capitalism, immigration and the national question.) *Edward Abbey: A Life* leaves me less sure of that. Edward Abbey came from and lived his life in the liberal milieu of the day. His intellectual and historical heroes were mostly liberal, and so were his friends. He had no apprehension of metaphysical truth or the religious basis of civilization, and his intellect suffered from the fatal reductionism of the left. On the other hand, he did share basic attitudes and ideas with certain of those people who go by the name "conservative," while remaining a vastly more honest, sensitive, independent, courageous, forthright, and altogether better man than most of those who smugly bear that label—or don't. Certainly, Edward Abbey was not a heroic figure. Just as certainly, he *was* a gentleman, a paleo-American, and, finally, a great man, if only for the reason that among his undeniable virtues were those for lack of which the American people themselves no longer deserve to be deemed great.

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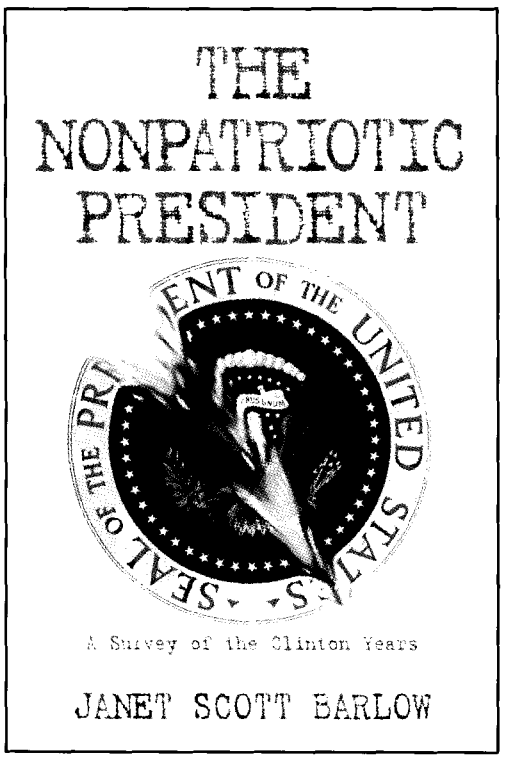

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